

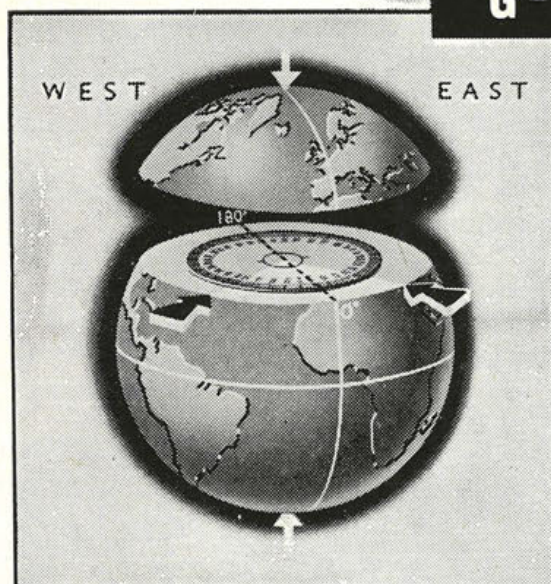
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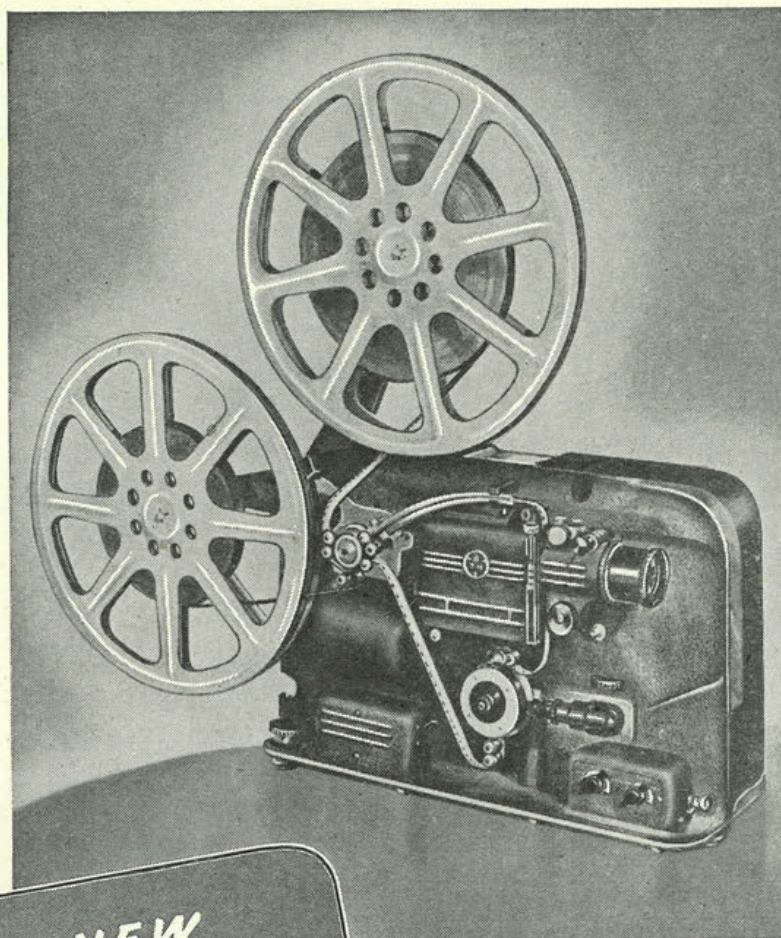
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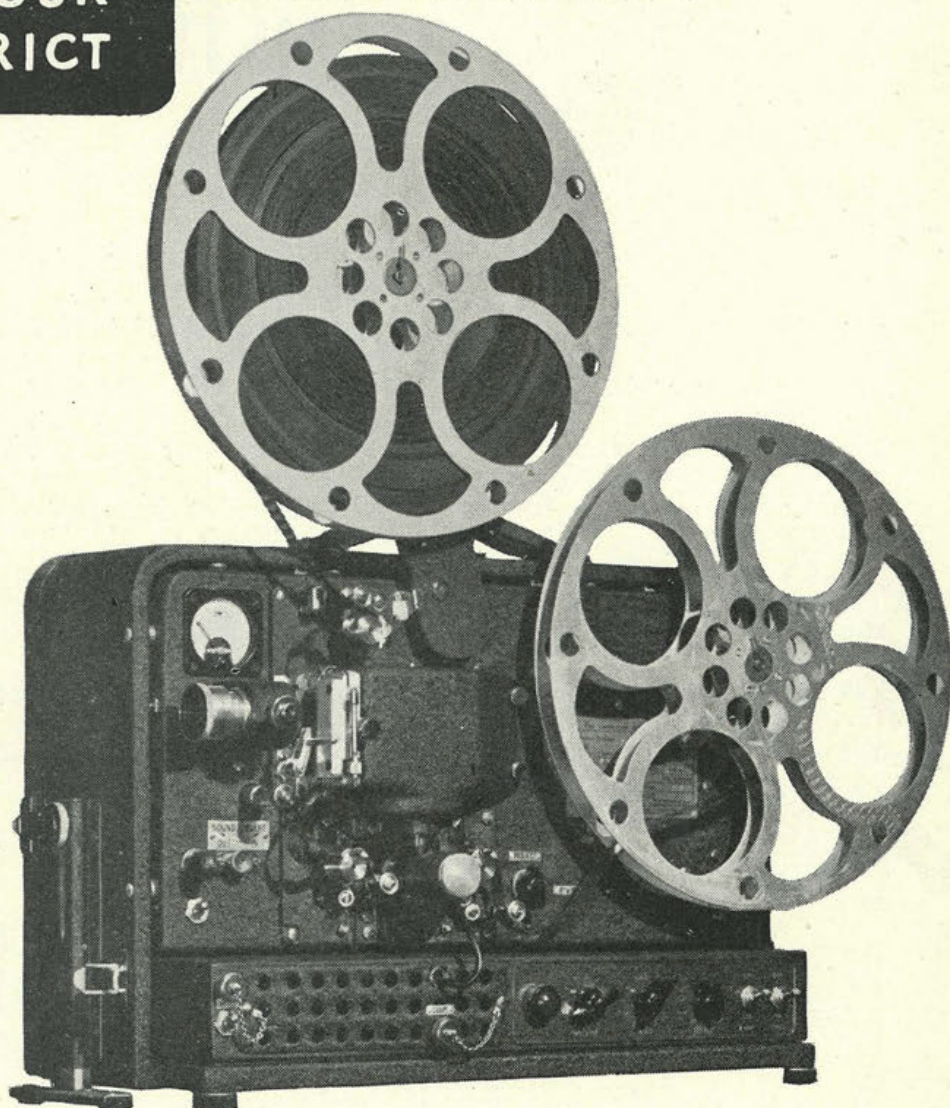
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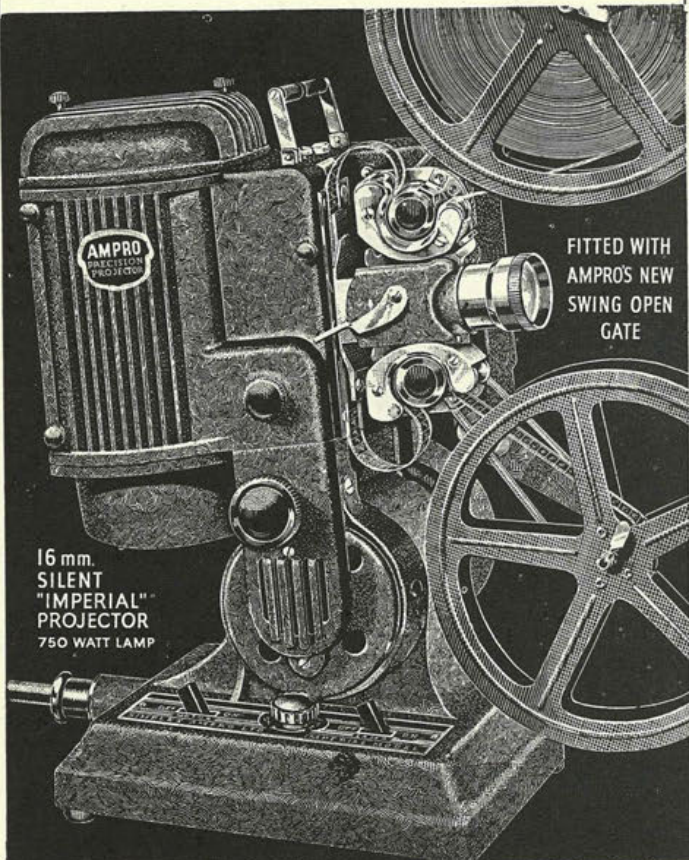


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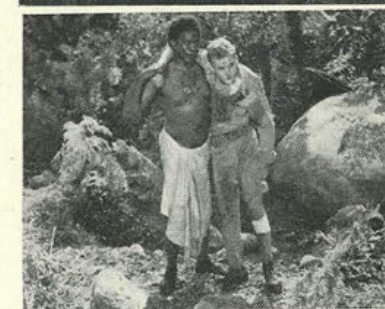
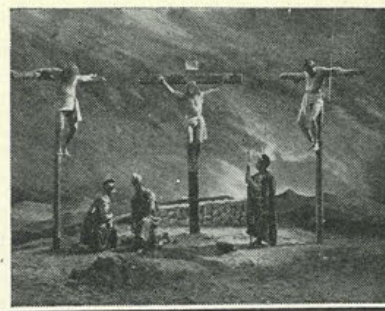
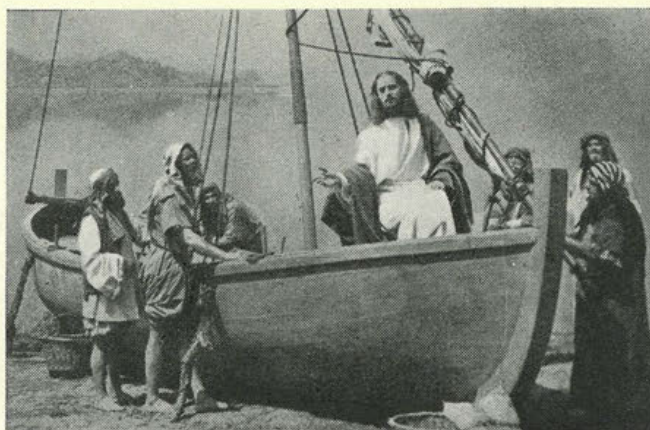
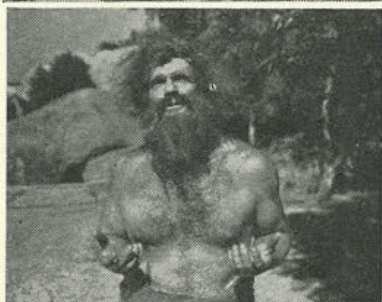
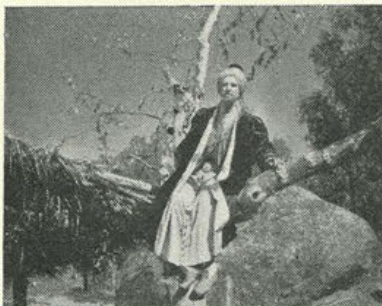
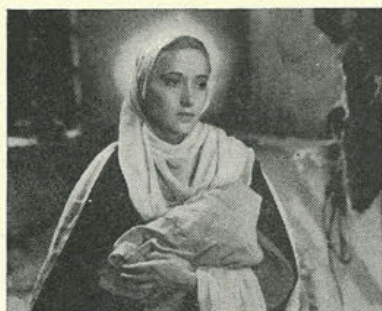
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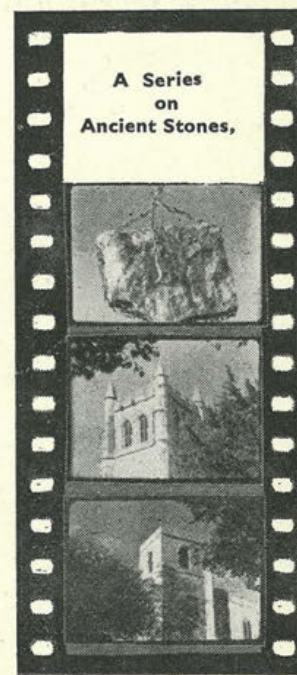
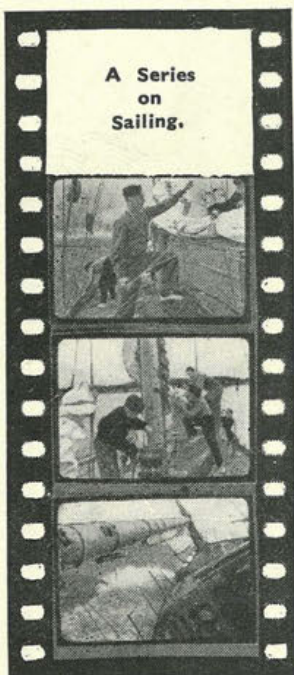
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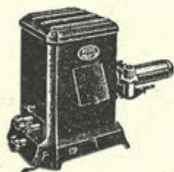
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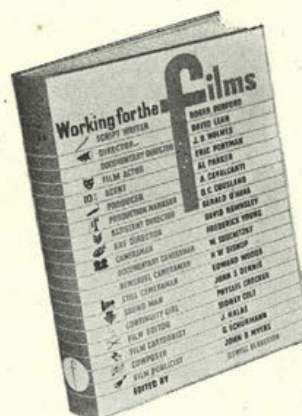
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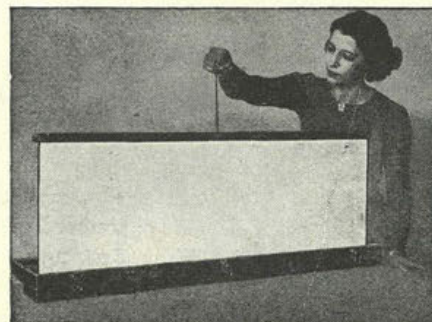


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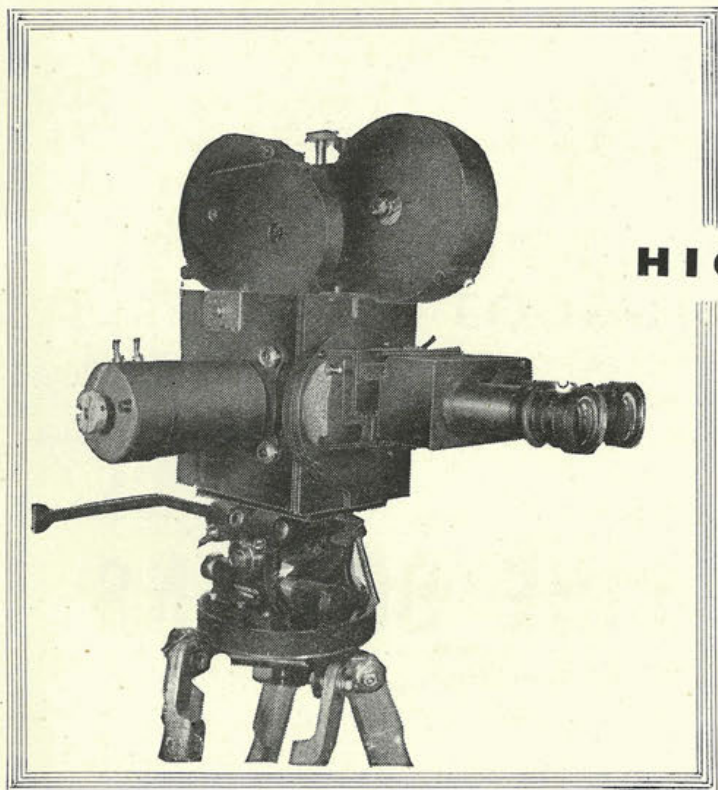
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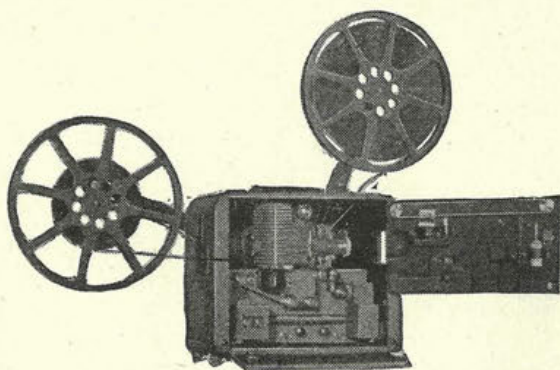



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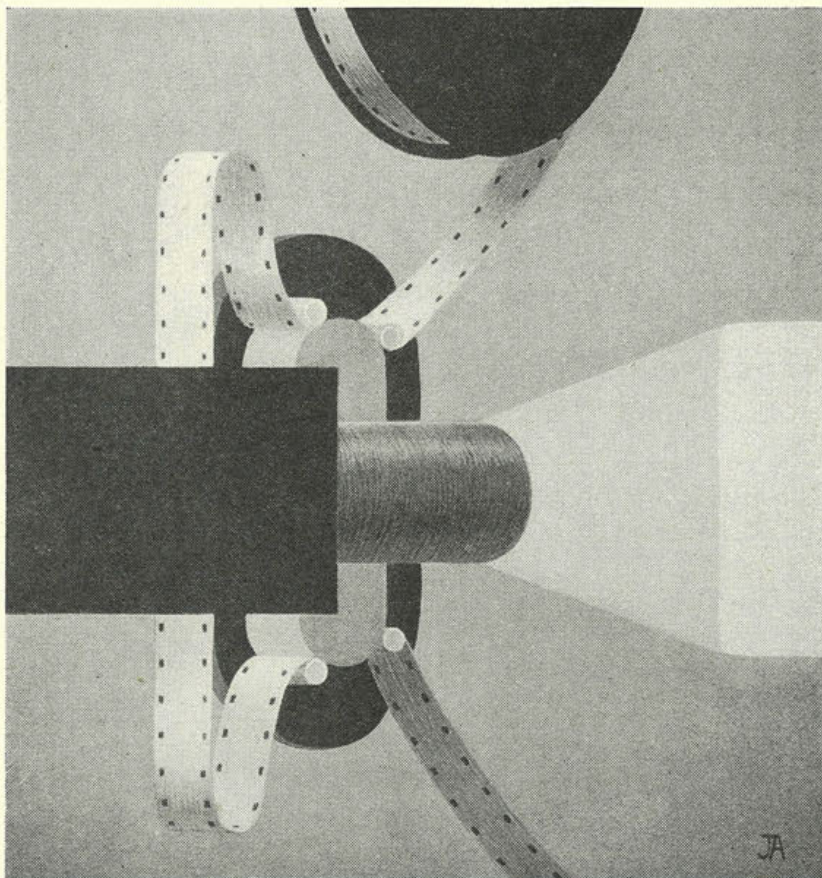
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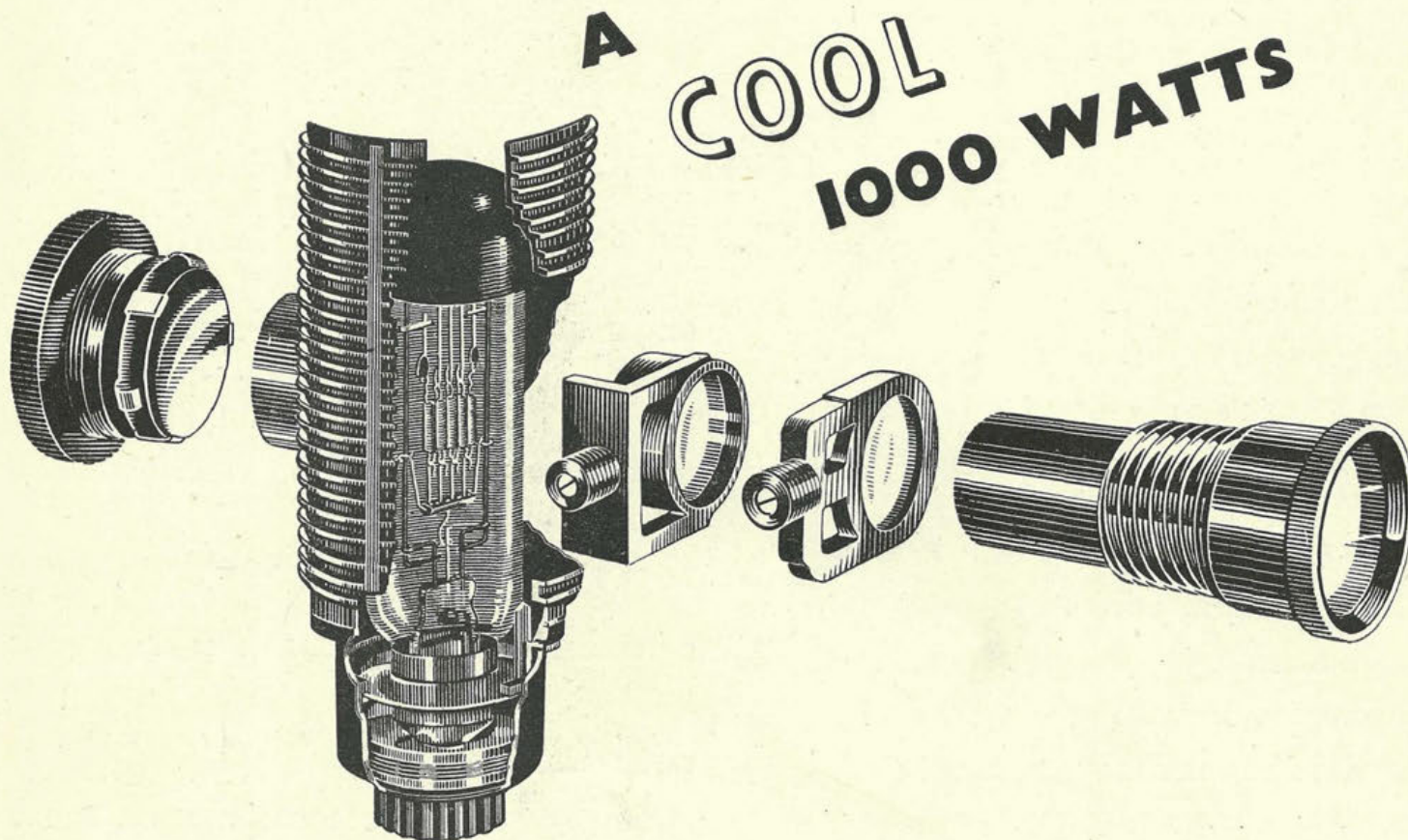
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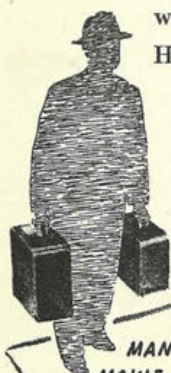
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Kvinna utan Ansikte (Woman Without a Face)

Svensk Filmindustri

THE SWEDISH FILM TO-DAY

By

H. FORSYTH HARDY

WHEN A EUROPEAN COUNTRY on this side of the Iron Curtain makes between forty and fifty feature films a year, we might expect to see and hear more of them in Britain than we do. I have for a long time been puzzled by the neglect of the Swedish cinema. One of the first and most widely appreciated foreign-language films shown in this country was Gustav Molander's *En Natt*; yet it was many years before we saw another Swedish film. I remember being impressed by *Intermezzo* when I saw it in Stockholm in 1937 and reporting on it with enthusiasm on returning to London; but no interest was taken in the film, although it took Ingrid Bergman to Hollywood and later reached us in an American version. Still the Swedish films were withheld from audiences in this country. When at length *Frenzy* arrived it had for many the effect of a startling discovery. Here was a film which, in theme and craftsmanship, could stand comparison with the best work being

done anywhere in cinema. Most critics had little hesitation in including it in their lists of the best films of the year.

The success of *Frenzy* has, I believe, turned the eyes of the foreign film importers northwards and we are likely to see more Swedish films before long. They will include two films produced by Terrafilm and directed by Hampe Faustman: a new version of *Crime and Punishment* in which the director plays Raskolnikov; and *The Girl and the Devil* with Gunn Wållgren as a girl with a witch's soul and Stig Järrel, the sadistic schoolmaster from *Frenzy*, as the devil. A further film to be seen shortly is *When the Meadows Bloom*, on the early days of the organised Labour movement. The film tax will limit further importation for the present; but if these films stimulate an interest comparable to *Frenzy*, they will have gone some distance towards building up the informed and appreciative audience French films enjoy in this country.



Victor Sjöström in "Rallare"

Svensk Filmindustri

As more films are shown, the characteristics of the Swedish cinema will become familiar to a wider public. From the period of its early flowering at the end of the first Great War, the Swedish cinema has had two qualities which have lent it distinction: its atmospheric use of natural material and the strong moral flavour of its themes. These elements, together with fine craftsmanship, are still the distinguishing characteristics of Swedish films to-day. There has inevitably been some shifting of emphasis and the moralising takes some unexpected forms; but it is still possible to find in the Swedish cinema, as Bardèche and Brasillach did, evidence of the influence of Selma Lagerlöf: a curious blending of ardent puritanism with a passionate love of nature and the echoes of the old sagas, the figure of Jesus Christ juxtaposed with witches and gnomes.

Some audiences in this country have already seen *Ordet* (*The Word*), a powerful film on a religious theme adapted from the play by the Danish poet and parson Kaj Munk. It is remarkable both for the vivid naturalism of the coastal village setting (Gustaf Molander directed) and for the intense performances of Victor Sjöström as the tyrannical head of a large family and of Rune Lindström as his half-mad preacher son who brings his sister-in-law back to life by his fanatic faith. I mention this possibly extreme example of the Swedish morality film to indicate the wide gulf between it and the stories which inspire (if that is the word) British and American film-makers. I cannot imagine such a theme being attempted, and with

such sustained seriousness, in any other film studio in the world to-day.

A CHALLENGING THEME

Frenzy, however, is more representative of the direction the Swedish morality film is taking to-day. It was written by Ingmar Bergman (based in part, I was told, on his own experiences as a youth) and this brilliant young writer has followed it with an even more challenging theme in *Kvinna utan Ansikte* (*Woman Without a Face*). This is a frank study of a nymphomaniac (Gunn Wållgren) and a young husband (Alf Kjellin) on whose life she has a deeply disturbing influence. *Frenzy* drew from Dilys Powell the comment that the film "shocks and delights by its bold, mature handling of a subject which, in the Anglo-Saxon cinema, would, I fancy, be syruped over, or perhaps treated to some childish parody of the psychiatrist's approach". It is difficult to conceive of *Woman Without a Face* being attempted in the Anglo-Saxon cinema; but here again is that high seriousness which marked the earlier film. The predicament of the sex-hungry girl is sincerely set forth, the origin of her condition is sympathetically examined, and the treatment in general is free from sensationalism. Cinematically *Woman Without a Face* (Svensk Filmindustri) is less exciting than *Frenzy*—Gustaf Molander's direction is more conventional than Alf Sjöberg's in the earlier film—and it is clear that the film takes its character primarily from the author.

Since nymphomania is scarcely an everyday screen subject, it was a little startling to find the same theme in another film which appeared simultaneously in Stockholm with *Woman Without a Face*. This was *Det Vackraste på Jorden* (Europa Film), translated for me as *The Most Beautiful Thing in the World*. Here the leading character is a skipper's young wife (Inger Juel) who moves into a new flat in the suburbs of Stockholm and contrives to bring tragedy into half-a-dozen lives. Eventually expelled by her husband, she moves out of the block of flats with the cynically clear intention of pursuing identical activities elsewhere. There is less evidence here of a serious social purpose, less restraint in the handling of the theme. Anders Henrikson, the director, also plays a leading part and there is another brilliant performance by Stig Järrel as a prurient prying little tobacconist. Inger Juel, a sultry, sulky beauty, is obviously destined for stardom, either in her own country or elsewhere.

These and similar films exploring complex sexual relationships are outside the subject range of the British and American cinemas. Censorship, and especially the American censorship, keeps them there. Much depends on the motive behind their production. It is easy to see how the dramatisation of sexual maladjustment could degenerate into sordid sensationalism. I discussed this matter with the Swedish Censor, Jan-Gunnar Lindström, and found him in a mood to defend such films as *Woman Without a Face*. As long as such themes were treated seriously, he said, he had no objection to them. He regarded them as evidence of the maturity of the Swedish cinema. Scripts are not submitted to him in advance as he does not consider that this method of censorship offers any real safeguard. He takes the enlightened view that the treat-

ment is all important and prefers to judge the completed film. He is prepared to concede that there is some apprehension about this trend in contemporary Swedish production although he does not share it.

The most characteristic Swedish films are still those which draw their strength from the countryside and the people. Such a film as *Tösen från Stormyrtorpet*, for example, directed by Gustaf Edgren and adapted from a novel by Selma Lagerlöf, has its roots deep in the Swedish way of life. Lacking the language, I found the literary origin hanging somewhat heavily on the film, although there is a wealth of skilled craftsmanship in the treatment of landscape and costume, farmstead and furnishing. A more pleasing film in this tradition is *Driver Dagg, Faller Regn* (*Rain Follows the Dew*), adapted from the Swedish novel of the same title. This is a period story of the mountainous northland, a romance between a gipsy fiddler (Alf Kjellin) and the farmer's daughter (Mai Zetterling) he meets at a dance. It is a stormy romance, pursued in the face of the farmer's violent opposition, and strong passions are aroused before the story reaches smooth waters. What makes the film unforgettable is the beauty of its natural setting: there is no hint anywhere of the studio. Gustaf Edgren is again the director and the superb photography is by Martin Bodin.

In Sweden the number of feature films wholly or partly made outside the studios must be proportionately larger than in any other film producing country. There is an economic reason as, given the stable weather conditions of the Swedish summer, exterior shooting is less expensive than studio production. The Swedes make a virtue of their economy, however, and even such a film as *Frenzy* gains in character from its street scenes and school exteriors. During the summer there are expeditions from the studios to different parts of the country. This summer, for example, a unit has been in the far north making *Rallare*, which might be translated as *Railroad Navy*: the story of the northward extension of the Swedish railway system some forty years ago. A leading part in the film is played by Victor Sjöström, the father of the Swedish cinema, who is still as active to-day as at any time in his long career.

COMEDIES AND DOCUMENTARIES

This use of natural locations can take many forms. In, for example, *His Majesty's Rival*, a spectacular historical romance of the period of Gustaf III, there is a sequence filmed at Drottningholm: a delightful ballet performed before the Court in the beautifully preserved gardens. (See illustration on page 180). It is the most satisfying part of a film which otherwise tends to be stagey and ponderous. Or again in *Pengar* (*Money*), one of Nils Poppe's films, we find the comedian using a forest where felling is in operation as the unlikely setting for a piece of clowning.

Poppe is a comedian whose style falls somewhere between Chaplin and Buster Keaton. A slim wistful figure with the typical sad clown's face, he is a talented mime and his films have passages of glorious fun. He wrote and directed his first productions and their loosely integrated



Rain Follows the Dew

Svensk Filmindustri

nature suggests that he is rather less versatile than Chaplin. His new film, *Stackars Lilla Sven*, an adaptation of "Mr. Cinders", is being directed by Hugo Bolander.

I shall not attempt any detailed reference to documentary production in Sweden, which is on a considerable scale and includes films for the schools as well as for the cinemas. In Arne Sucksdorff, whose *Rhythm of a City* was one of the outstanding films at the Edinburgh Festival, Sweden has a brilliant young director whose work has already earned international recognition.

Comparing impressions with those formed on a visit ten years ago, I would conclude that Swedish film-makers have gained greatly in confidence in the interval. The dramatic films are handled more firmly, the romantic stories are told with more verve, and the farces seem more buoyant. In the short films there is a rediscovery of the screen as an essentially visual medium. I found among the young film-makers—Sucksdorff, Ingmar Bergman, Rune Lindström, Alf Sjöberg, Gösta Werner—an eagerness to experiment reminiscent of France in the late 'twenties and Britain in the early days of the documentary movement. We may yet see a second flowering of the Swedish cinema.



The First Gentleman

THE NEW CAVALCANTI

Columbia-British

PRESENTING LEN LYE

*Being a lecture given to the Netherlands Historisch Filmarchief, Seminaire des Arts, Brussels
and Danske Filmsamfund by CAVALCANTI, F.R.S.A.*

FIRST OF ALL I want your permission to express my thanks to the Central Office of Information, Shell Film Unit, the British Film Institute and to Mr. Len Lye for lending us the films that are going to be projected after this talk.

I was glad to hear that most of these works are practically unknown to you here, because I have no doubt you will get a great amount of pleasure and learning out of them.

Some of you may ask why I am presenting these films. There are two reasons for it: the first one is that when the British Film Institute in London showed a similar programme a few years ago, the Organisers asked Len Lye whom he wanted to introduce the projection. He very kindly suggested that I should do so. The second is that

this lecture is only a pretext. In Great Britain today there is a lot of talk about austerity and there is a little austerity as well, and one is glad to get away from both for a few days.

Besides, a moral can be drawn from a pretext as well as from any deeds. Didn't Len Lye himself use publicity as a pretext for his art?

While mentioning publicity, I want to make it clear that most of the organisations and firms that commissioned Len Lye to make films never expected to increase, by doing so, their sales. In general the non-theatrical programmes of documentaries in Great Britain are passably dull, and the coloured jazz renderings of Len's early work woke up

audiences by their wit, their quick tempo and their originality. When you see these publicity films you'll realise that it would have been futile to expect people to post more parcels after *Colour Box*, smoke more cigarettes after *Kaleidoscope* or save more money after *Rainbow Dance*. Anyway a Len Lye film brought a great amount of prestige to its sponsors.

CLINGING

Len Lye could be described in the History of British Cinema by one word—*Experiment*—and experiment has become very rare ever since the war was over and he went to America. In his time almost all the documentary makers in Great Britain were experimenting. Nowadays they cling to the general utilitarian tendencies. They forget that by not trying to enlarge cinematic expression they are blunting a weapon which they profess to be of utmost importance in the social struggle.

The re-birth of the British feature film came, as you know, out of this early documentary period. Feature films in British studios inherited, amongst other things, this care for experiment. Let us hope, with the speed up of production so badly needed in Britain, this care won't be overlooked and experiment confined, or should we say, relegated, to industrial lines.

Perhaps the greatest of Len Lye's experiments were with colour. But rhythm came very close nearby. And there were many other items such as camera angles, and a very personal way of pursuing pure filmic expression.

Because Len Lye deals with such a wide range of experiment you must not think of him as a highbrow. Films have always been endangered by highbrowism. Think of the self-consciousness of certain French films of today. And remember, too, that it was these pseudo-intellectuals who said that film was the "silent art", and now say that black and white is "art" and that colour films should not be made. I have no doubt that most of them have never seen a Len Lye film, as I have no doubt that when relief comes they will cry for the "flat silver screen".

It is important to understand that Len Lye is above all a superb craftsman. There is no dilettantism about him and no false virtuosity.

THE MAN

Now I might as well come to Len Lye's biography. He was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1901. We know very little about him before his films, but in a curious way certain shapes he painted and used in his films have a subtle relation to the art of the Island Indians of the Pacific. Yes, Len Lye was a painter, but I personally like his films better than his painting. The next thing we know of him is his love of jazz; a love so great that he called his first child Bixie because of the famous jazz trumpet player, Bix Beiderbecke, who was the first outstanding white trumpet player and a great jazz musician.

Len Lye made his first picture, *Tusalava*, in 1929. The excerpt I am showing you may appear, after the Disney fireworks, a trifle out-dated. It uses a technique that Len Lye abandoned completely when he tackled his next job.

There is a gap of six years between *Tusalava* and *Colour Box*. I was then Grierson's right-hand man at the G.P.O. Film Unit, and I remember that Len Lye came to see us and said that he wanted to make a film without a camera. It took a lot of his personal charm to make us listen to him, but when he had explained what he wanted to do, both Grierson and myself were convinced that he could do it. Grierson, that King of Showmen, wouldn't miss this opportunity. Furthermore, it sounded frightfully simple.

It was then that he became my youthful Godfather by calling me Cav. and making me lose seven letters of my name. In all the British studios nobody calls me anything else much but Cav.

Both *Colour Box* and *Kaleidoscope* (1935) were made on the same principle. To me, *Colour Box* is a very important film, not only because of its successful use of colour, but also because it is a demonstration of the rhythm created on the screen by the succession of lines composing each individual image or frame, or each group of frames. Eisenstein, in his book "Film Sense", takes much more time and much more pains to explain this same thing that *Colour Box* throws at you so naturally and clearly in less than three minutes.

For his next film, *Birth of a Robot* (1935/36), made in collaboration with Humphrey Jennings, Len Lye tried to use puppets. Many will find a certain resemblance between his film puppets and those of George Pal. But what I like in *Birth of a Robot* is the abstract sequence of "the storm" and a certain poetic quality of the whole film, neither of which is to be found in Pal's puppet films.

Len Lye was not to pursue the puppet technique of *Birth of a Robot*, as he had not pursued the cartoon technique of *Tusalava*. In his next film, *Rainbow Dance* (1936), he tackled for the first time the human figure and this is perhaps the first essay in film-ballet. Rupert Doone was used as the dancer. The amount of technical knowledge of colour shown in this film and in his next, *Trade Tattoo* (1937), is formidable.

BLACK AND WHITE

It seems that *Trade Tattoo* was to be the turning point in Len Lye's career. After this stylisation of documentary in which all the possibilities of colour seem to have been exhausted, Len Lye turned to black and white.

N. or N.W. (1937) comes to the screen with as little inhibition in it as its colour predecessors. The new ideas seem to follow each other in rapid succession. It has a strange poetic quality again, which is purely filmic.

The war came. Like all the technicians, like everybody else in Great Britain, Len Lye mobilised his talent. He did a series of propaganda pictures. Of those I have chosen to present three different types.

First, *Swinging the Lambeth Walk* (1939), an experiment in the use of the optical printing machine. It came off a hundred per cent. and delighted audiences during those gloomy days, and I have no doubt will delight you as well.

Secondly, *When the Pie was Opened* (1941), that somehow gives flavour and grace to the most tasteless of all dishes, the vegetable pie.

Third and lastly, *Kill or be Killed* (1942). This is pure documentary. Its dramatic suspense is exceptional as well as its great simplicity. It will last and, who knows? perhaps in a few years it will be shown again as an exponent of the horrors of war.

To praise without reservation is the critic's most difficult task and about this last film that will be shown I cannot but say that it has the weight of a classic Greek tragedy. *Kill or be Killed* keeps also, in a slow tempo, the same sense of rhythm that we find in *Colour Box*. The patterns of the bracken, as the camera crawls in the woods, could have been designed by Len Lye himself in any of his earlier films.

This war work, particularly the more conventional films, such as *Newspaper Train* and *Cameramen at War*, which I purposely did not include in this show, must have given the heads of "March of Time" the idea of engaging Len Lye's services in 1943. He had done for them at the same date as *Swinging the Lambeth Walk* an item entitled *Profile of Britain*.

He left for America (1944) and in New York, while directing seven items all together for "The March of Time", from *Teen Age Girls* to *Is Everybody Listening*, he is engaged in the making of a full length picture about basic English.

Soon I will be leaving this screen to Len Lye himself. He is one of the few directors in the history of film that can have a complete cycle of his works shown in one programme. In this case it should be named "Len Lye in England". You will find that it is the best way in which an artist can be judged. You will find, too, how consistent his work is and how his assurance grows with his experience.

After the London presentation, Len Lye said that I had explained his work better than he could do himself. The fact is that I didn't try to explain it at all. His films are like Mallarmé's poems or Picasso's paintings: you like them or you don't. When you like them you will understand them. Or perhaps there is nothing to understand—you will just enjoy them. And if you don't, you must just walk out. But if you do, I will feel sorry for you.

THE QUARTER IN BRITAIN

By

ARTHUR VESSELO

IN THE DISTINCTLY RELATIVE WORLD of day-to-day film criticism, hankerings after absolute values are liable to be misleading. Commonly, the result takes the form of over-enthusiasm: there is always some new film in circulation which somebody or other has thought "the best British (or French, or American) film ever made", but which turns out on viewing to be just another middling piece, the customary patchwork of good, bad and indifferent. Perhaps less frequently, but just as revealingly, a film which is not quite up to the mark at every point, or which happens to fall into a slightly unusual category, is underrated or completely written off, for the sake of being emphatic.

The fact is that a film may be technically sound and well acted and yet not particularly important or memorable, while on the contrary a film may occasionally appear which is full of failings and yet is redeemed by an underlying virtue. And again, a film which is clearly intended to be viewed from a particular aspect may be strikingly misjudged if viewed from another.

An outstanding example of the last class is *The October Man*, which was dealt with in the autumn issue. This is fairly obviously a film of atmosphere (and, incidentally, of psychological symbolism), recognizably in the Hitchcock tradition; and on this level it is an able and exciting venture, worthy to be compared with the best. Yet it is odd how many reviewers limited themselves to intellectualising over its plot, and, failing completely to observe its atmospheric implications, wrote it down as a second-rate film without significance.

Another recent British film (of a very different kind) which has been subjected to some curious misjudgments is *The Little Ballerina*. This is a children's film, a quite modest and pleasant enough effort, following in the train of *Bush Christmas* and made by the same producers. Though its purpose ought to be plain enough to anyone, and though the name of the producing organization is Children's Entertainment Films, it has actually been criticised in certain quarters for not being sufficiently adult in treatment, and in others for not being sufficiently instructional. This, surely, is criticism to end criticism. While it is true that *The Little Ballerina* is not up to the standard of *Bush Christmas*—which was admirable—it still represents a useful move in a field that has been too little explored.

STALE FORMULAS

There are, of course, some films in respect of which hesitation is over-nice and controversy superfluous. They are the pot-boilers, the tear-jerkers, the blatant starring vehicles, the flat box-office formula concoctions. These films, alas, are always with us: no quarter is without them. The present quarter, too, has its complement—its *White Unicorns* and other anaemic screen-figments, whose retirement to a home for overworked and improbable monsters is long overdue. The only doubt is whether one ought to berate or ignore them. If one ignores them, it is rather in the hope that Time, the solver of problems, will by itself at last settle their hash; but the signs would suggest that this is unwarrantable optimism.

It must be repeated, however, that not all films of which disparaging words are spoken are in this class. In the case of *The Woman in the Hall*—directed by Jack Lee, who was responsible for *Children on Trial*—the chief probable reason for disappointment is simply that too much was expected. The film is from a story by G. B. Stern, and is about a woman confidence trickster who brings up two daughters on her fraudulent gains but nearly ruins the life of the more sensitive one in the process. Such material is far from foolproof (indeed, its handling could have been disastrous); and in places the continuity is thin and a trifle unconvincing. But it is agreeably acted, particularly by Ursula Jeans as the woman and Cecil Parker as her principal dupe; and the direction has a restraint and sense of timing which are good auguries for the future. One of the less satisfactory performances is that of Jean Simmons as the sensitive daughter. She has been fêted and starred to excess in the last year, and appears to have suffered by it—temporarily, let us hope.

IMPERFECT SUCCESS

In the ranks of the over-castigated is *Fame Is The Spur*, the Boulting Brothers' version of Howard Spring's novel about the career of a Labour politician of MacDonald-like quality—an idealist with a flaw in his character. There is nothing easier than to pick this film to pieces, for the makers have committed a succession of considerable errors. They have miscast Michael Redgrave in the main part, they have had obvious difficulties with the construction (as what converter of life-story-novel into film does not?) and in certain passages they have come down completely, as in the early sequence of feeble semi-fantasy on Peterloo. Yet it is absurd to write the film off as valueless. Even if it failed over every point of detail, it would still have the virtue, rare in the cinema, of a genuine and mature idea; and furthermore, it does not fail over every point of detail. Rather oddly, the characters take on a much more lifelike stature as they grow older. Michael Redgrave himself fits much more naturally into his surroundings in the latter stages; and there is a moving and authentic death-bed scene between him and Rosamund John. (There is also a little incidental gem of acting, towards the beginning, from Sir Seymour Hicks.) Although undoubtedly this is a film of many imperfections, it is far indeed from the unrelieved failure that some have claimed it, and succeeds in carrying a large part of its point.

Robert Hamer's *It Always Rains On Sunday*—a day of life and crime in the East End of London—has called forth excessive strictures for reasons of its own. Particular critics have found the film sordid and unelevated in its subject-matter. This raises a delicate problem, and not one for a brief aye or nay. Sordidness and depressionism certainly need no encouragement; but do they really sum the film up? It is a film with vitality, humour, and more than a gleam of atmospheric magic, as well as back-street squalor; and only the hasty will deny the naturalism of much of its visual and spoken language. Are we to reject these qualities in the context? There appears to be no good reason for doing so. If the total effect were of gloom and subterranean violence it would be another matter, but to object to a picture of Bethnal Green because it includes

aspects of low life and dwells on some of them seems to be pushing the argument too far. At any rate Robert Hamer is clearly a director worth watching.

On the opposite side of the fence, among the over-praised of the quarter's films, is Korda's Technicolor production of *An Ideal Husband*. Oscar Wilde's merits as a dramatist are hardly of a manner to be displayed to outstanding advantage on the screen. His special line in elegant paradox gains nothing in particular by the transference, while the Victorian melodramatics and coincidences of his plot-making are too glaringly illuminated. The settings are lavish, with a good deal of dexterous change of scene to convey an impression of movement, the costumes are handsome, and the acting everything that is required. The spirit of Wilde is not lost; but it is difficult to see why it was necessary to go to all this trouble and expense in transmitting it, when it could have been transmitted at least as well by a good stage-production, and when there are so many other things that the screen can do.

DEFECTIVE

Also among the over-praised are two films with a much-publicized new star, Kieron Moore. The first along, *A Man About The House*, has now done the complete round—novel, play, film (all that remains to start the ball rolling once more is "the book of the film"). The tale, originally by Francis Brett Young, is of two staid British spinsters forty years back, of how they go to live in a villa near Naples, and of how one of them is nearly done to death by a scheming Italian with a seductive torso (Kieron Moore). The film starts off amid an air of satirical comedy but ends in a mood of heavy melodrama; nor is the transition between the two parts satisfactory. Otherwise, the film is on the whole slickly made, but quite superficial. The Italy it presents is a scraping off the surface, an Englishman's Italy—cleverly reconstituted, for what it is worth, but not worth much. The film's major defect is that it has no discernible point.

Mine Own Executioner is the other film, directed by Anthony Kimmins. Here Kieron Moore appears as an ex-R.A.F. pilot, mentally unbalanced through his experiences as a prisoner of war, who is induced by his wife to visit a psychiatrist for treatment, but with tragic results. This film is a cut above *A Man About The House*, but it still does not seem to deserve all the fanfares with which it has been welcomed. Probably the feeling of contrast with the usual trite Hollywood nonsense about psychiatry has much to do with the general reaction, and the portrayal of a psychiatrist as an individual with his own problems of adjustment has evidently captured the critical imagination. Burgess Meredith's extremely capable performance as the psychiatrist is an obvious help. There is also an exciting passage on a fireman's ladder to highlight the physical drama. The film has a little of everything, all neatly done; but on the last analysis the illusion that it penetrates to the more shadowy places of the human mind is just an illusion—nothing more. One of the most attractive things about the film is Lawrence Hanray's extraordinarily lifelike sketch of an opinionated coroner of a familiar type (one learns with regret of Lawrence Hanray's recent death); and another is the little twist at the very end.



La Mantilla de Beatriz

Ballesteros

FOUR FILMS

Mariona Rebull

Ballesteros





Don Buffalo Bill

Ballesteros

FROM SPAIN

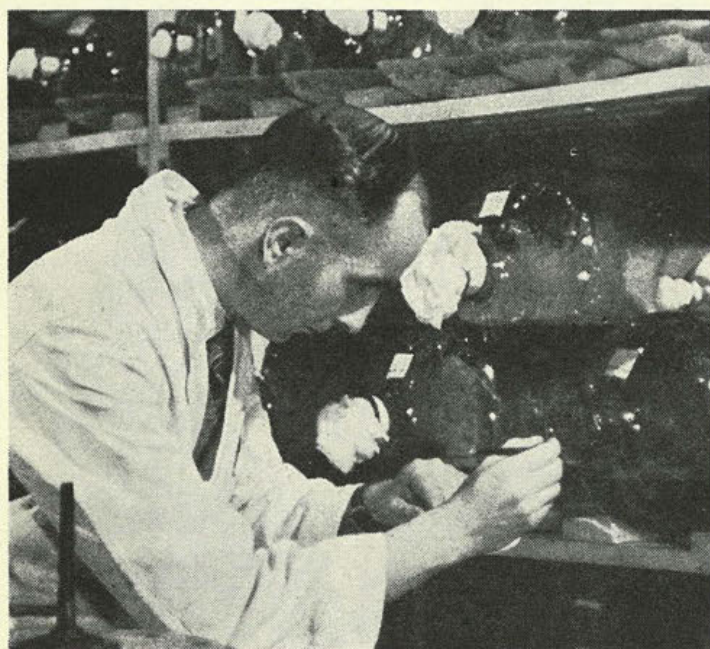
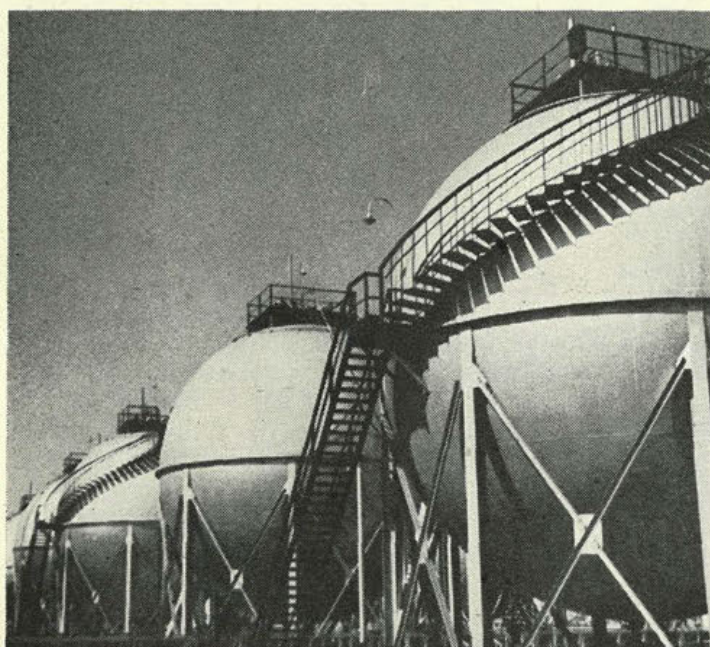
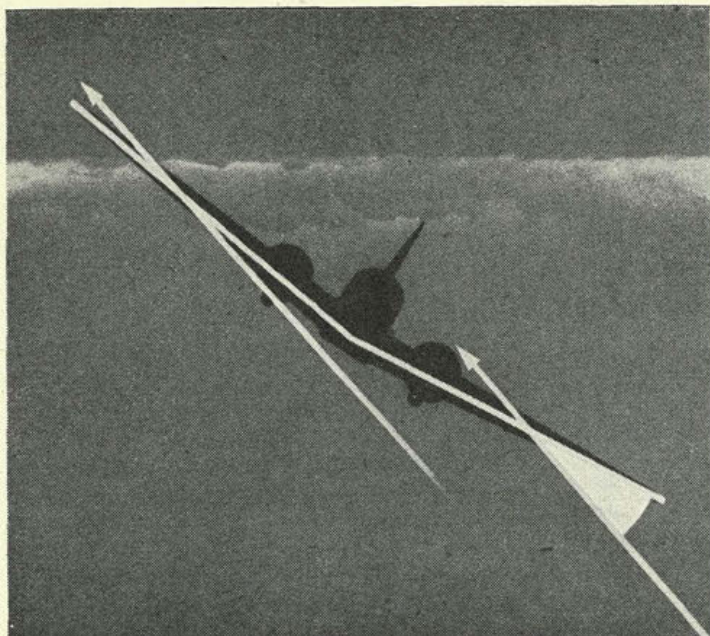
La Gitana Yel Rey

Ballesteros



THE DEVELOPMENT IN GREAT

Since SIGHT AND SOUND, eleven years ago—Films, developments of outstanding importance which have, in a large part, been due to it. Here DENIS SEGALLER, B.Sc., a series of articles.



THERE IS A GREAT TEMPTATION to try to answer the inevitable—and vexed—question “What is a scientific film?” Most people would answer: any film on a scientific subject; but there are those who define it as a film on *any* subject which treats that subject in a truly scientific manner. Let us leave it at that, with the reservation that the field of scientific films is a very wide one indeed.

Eleven years ago SIGHT AND SOUND (Winter, 1936-7) published a Symposium on Films and Science. It consisted of summarized lectures by four well-known scientists—Professor Lancelot Hogben, who dealt with the film in mathematics; Dr. Julian Huxley (Biology); R. A. (now Sir Robert) Watson-Watt (Physics); and Dr. B. A. Keen (Agriculture). Between them they outlined most of the essential functions of the film in science as recognized today: Huxley, for instance, stressed the film’s great power, by magnifying or shrinking the time-scale, to give a direct realization of processes that are too fast or too slow for the eye, and in particular to telescope a long sequence of events into a single process—a fact of great value in biological research; Watson-Watt referred to the expository and dramatic possibilities of repetition, contrast and inter-comparison, and also the film’s ability to use animated diagrams and models in the mechanistic representation of non-visual phenomena.

The same issue of SIGHT AND SOUND also contained an article by Frank Goodliffe on cinemicrography, as well as news items about scientific films at various educational conferences and a programme of over 15 scientific films at that year’s Physical Society Exhibition. There was also an account of the Paris Scientific Film Congress, which emphasized the research aspect of scientific films.

All of which goes to show that there was considerable activity and interest in scientific films eleven years ago. In spite of this, however, there were at that time relatively few first-rate scientific films available in this country. There were, of course, exceptions—some of the “Secrets of Life” series were excellent, and other G.B.I. productions

(Top) “How an Aeroplane Flies”—Shell Film Unit

(Middle) “Refinery Processes—Gasoline”—Shell Film Unit.

(Bottom) “Take Thou”—Basic Films for Evans Medical Supplies, Ltd.

OF THE SCIENTIFIC FILM BRITAIN

ago, published a *Symposium on Scientific portance have occurred—developments the efforts of the Scientific Film Associa- outlines the present situation in the first of*

that come to mind are *The Story of a Disturbance* and *The Cathode Ray Oscillograph*. Also about that time there appeared one or two interesting “teachers’-aid” diagram films on mathematics, of which the best known is probably *The equation $\ddot{x} + x = 0$* . To these were added during the next two years or so some Shell Film Unit productions; such films as *First Principles of the Petrol Engine* set what was then a high standard, while *Transfer of Power* (The history of the toothed wheel) is still in many ways an outstanding scientific documentary.

But in spite of these few exceptions, the general lack of good scientific films was keenly felt. There was an urgent need for more, on the lines indicated in the Sight and Sound Symposium—in teaching, in medicine, in industry, in research, and for the general public.

What progress has the scientific film made in this country since then? Little was achieved at first. But the war brought several developments of outstanding importance which helped to raise the status of the scientific film.

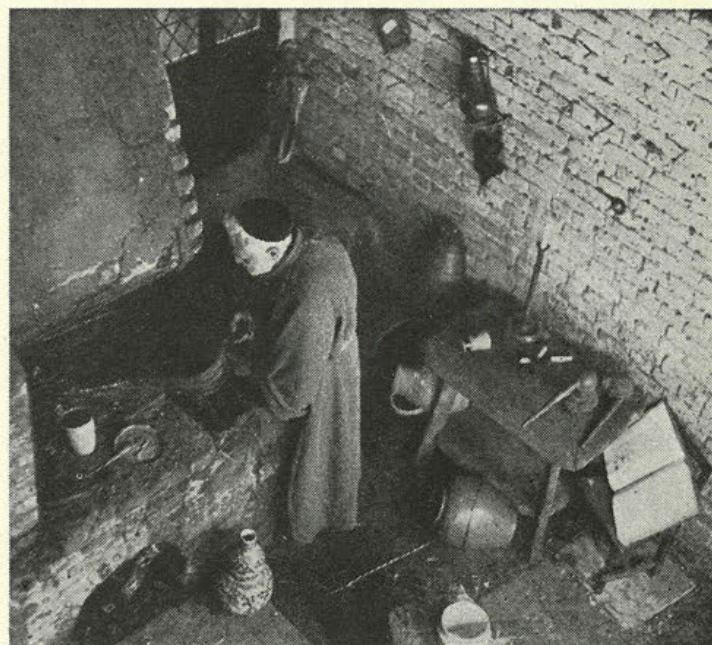
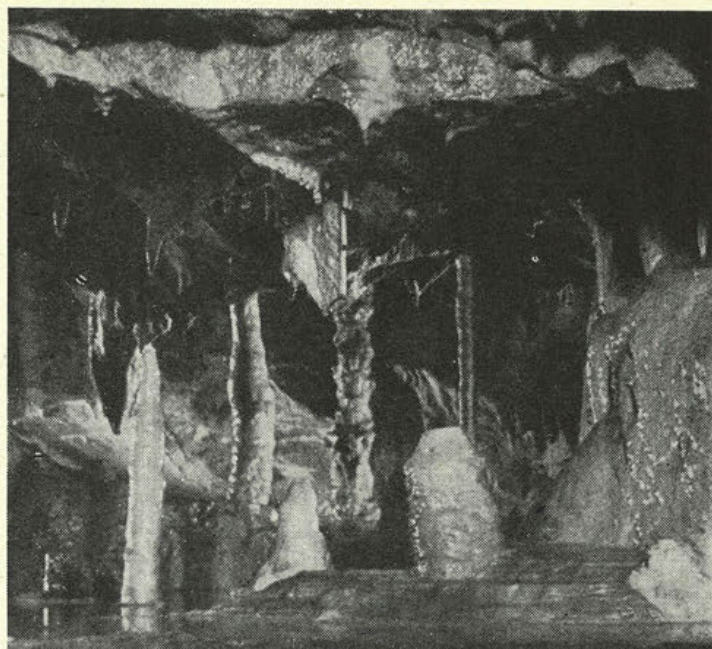
WARTIME DEVELOPMENTS

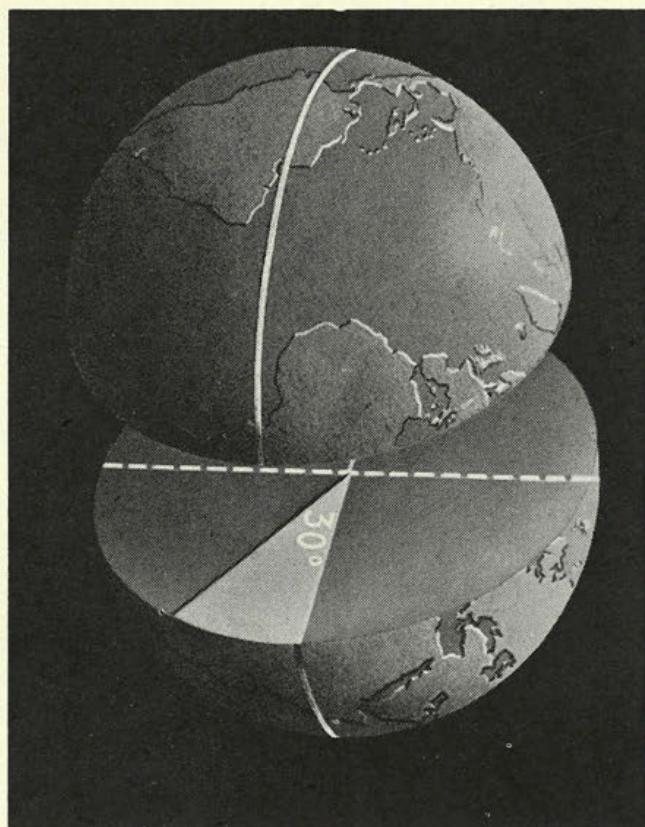
First and foremost there was the policy, adopted by all three Service Departments, of large-scale technical training by means of the film. The Services found themselves faced at the outbreak of war with the problem of training large numbers of unskilled personnel in entirely new techniques of a scientific or semi-scientific nature—in gunnery, tactics, bombing, Radar and Asdic, to mention only a few—and they soon turned for help to the film. The Navy conducted much research and experiment into the most efficient use of films and other visual aids in technical training; the Naval Training Department of the Admiralty was also responsible for the production of about two hundred excellent training films. The other two Services also produced or sponsored excellent films of this type. Altogether in this way about a thousand films on scientific and technical subjects were produced during the war. They were by no means all perfect; but, taken over the whole duration of the war, they represented a tremendous step forward in the field of the scientific film.

(Top) “*Limestone in Nature*”—Realist Film Unit for Imperial Chemical Industries.

(Middle) “*Uses of Limestone*”—Realist Film Unit for Imperial Chemical Industries.

(Bottom) “*History of the Discovery of Oxygen*”—Realist Film Unit for Imperial Chemical Industries.





Latitude and Longitude

Gaumont-British Instructional

In parallel with gradually improving technique in the production of this type of film, great advances were made towards correct methods of using them. Classroom techniques were not always perfect, either, but the average level of instruction was considerably raised by the use of these visual aids, while those of H.M. ships fortunate enough to have first-rate instructors were certainly treated to a new and extremely high standard of education with the assistance of visual aids.

Together with this great expansion of training film production for the Services went the wartime development of training in Civil Defence, medicine, industry, and public health and hygiene. Here, as with many of the Services' requirements, the Films Division of the Ministry of Information played a leading part; by its unsurpassed work of co-ordination in sponsoring, or getting sponsored, the right films, and then getting them produced, with proper technical liaison, by the right film units, the Films Division indeed did much to foster the development of the scientific film as such. Coupled with the Films Division went the Central Film Library, which lent a further stimulus by helping to distribute, and popularize, some of these wartime scientific films (although during the war practically none of the actual Service training films were available to outside audiences for security reasons). A vast number of research and record films were also produced during the war, but these were almost without exception on the secret list.

Finally, in the autumn of 1943, the Scientific Film Association was founded to take over, and expand, the work of the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers, which had up till then done much useful work in listing and grading scientific films. Among

the aims of the new Association were "to promote the national and international use of the scientific film, in order to achieve the widest understanding and appreciation of scientific method and outlook, especially in relation to social progress; to collect, collate and distribute information on the scientific film; to publish comprehensive lists of films graded according to scientific merit and suitability for audiences". The Association at once set about implementing its aims; and—to anticipate slightly—by October, 1946, it had fulfilled, amongst many others, an important one in the publication of a comprehensive "Catalogue of Films of General Scientific Interest Available in Great Britain". About this Catalogue, and the system of appraisal of scientific films which largely made it possible, more will be said later.

As a result of all this wartime development, conditions by the end of the war were, more than ever before, favourable for the production of the many scientific films so badly needed in the fields of education, medicine, industry and the rest. Broadly speaking, the experiences of the war in instructional, training and research films, as well as in the wider fields of propaganda, information and public relations, had taught both producers and sponsors a great deal. The way was now open for a steady increase in production. The technique of film production was itself surer and less hesitant—particularly in animated diagram and model work, and in the use of colour, which had taken enormous strides forward during the war. Perhaps even more important, there was now—by contrast with pre-war days—no lack of sponsorship. This came, and still comes, largely from Government Departments—in particular the Ministry of Education—through the Ministry of Information and its peacetime counterpart, the Central Office of Information. But it is also coming increasingly from big industrial concerns, who since the war have gone into sponsorship in a far bigger way than before. Of these, probably I.C.I. have been the biggest, with the Gas Council and Shell as close runners-up.

The more directly sociological side of scientific films had, of course, a firm foundation in the established traditions of British documentary; such films as *We Live in Two Worlds*, *World of Plenty* and the Army films made by Shell on Personnel Selection, for example, will always remain front-line scientific films and point the way for future productions of this type.

PRESENT-DAY PRODUCTION

Surveying British production of scientific films today, one finds the main output coming from four main sources: G.B.I., who continue to turn out competent productions, with such occasional masterpieces as *Latitude and Longitude* (in colour) and *Atomic Physics*; and three documentary Units—those of Realist, Shell, and Basic. Recent productions from these three include *Ammonia*, *Salt*, *Limestone* and *History of the Discovery of Oxygen*, from Realist, sponsored by I.C.I. but not as yet available for distribution; *Approach to Science* (for A.B.C.A.) and *A Single-Point Fuel Injector* (for technical aviation audiences) from Shell; *Precision Echo-Sounding* (for Marine Instruments Ltd.), *Potato-Root Eelworm* and *The Souring of Milk* (for Ministry of Agriculture) from Basic. Other sources which should be mentioned are:—Photomicrography Ltd., whose title indicates their specialized work; Nucleus, who are specializing in medical films; D.A.T.A., who have produced several interesting films for the Cotton Board: Science

Films; Merton Park (some recent films on elementary electricity); and Seven League, who have made a number of important medical films.

One finds, too, that present trends are very often towards integrated series of films—for example, Realist's three Series for I.C.I., *The Technique of Anaesthesia*, for medical students in their second clinical year (11 films), the *Soil Fertility* series for young farmer's clubs, etc. (4 films) and the *Limestone* series at present still in production (one of the series for schools); the same Unit's new series of three teaching films on *Heat* for children from 11 to 15, sponsored by the Gas Council; G.B.I.'s series at present in production on the phenomena arising from the rotation of the globe (of which *Latitude and Longitude* is the first, and *The How and Why of Day and Night* and *The Seasons* are well under way); Shell's two forthcoming series—*How An Aeroplane Flies* (6 films on elementary aerodynamics intended for senior schools, A.T.C. Cadets, etc.) and the *Refinery* Series of 3 films intended for adult lay audiences. Another important trend illustrated by the above examples is an ever-growing concentration of the purpose of such films, the "target" audience aimed at being much more clearly defined than was the case before the war. The three Realist films on *Heat*, by the way, in many ways set a new high standard in this type of classroom film, and break fresh ground by including direct questions to the audience, with no answers given.

WORK OF THE SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION

An important development since pre-war days is the organized critical appraisal system of the Scientific Film Association. This grew out of the pioneer work on appraisal and grading of scientific films done by the Association of Scientific Workers' Scientific Films Committee. S.F.A.'s own Appraisal Committee took the A.Sc.W.'s "Graded List of Scientific Films" as a starting-point, and, working jointly, the two committees have added to it continuously; the appraisal system, together with a more detailed grading system embracing different types of audience, have been standardized and details published in a pamphlet entitled "The Classification, Appraisal and Grading of Scientific Films".* On these appraisals the General Catalogue, mentioned earlier, is based. This Catalogue, which contains 595 titles of films, with data on content, distribution, gauge and running time, is the first of its kind to appear in this country. Of the films listed, 266 are critically appraised.

Naturally, any catalogue of this type can never be completely up to date owing to time lags involved in appraising new films and in printing and publishing. The work of the Appraisal Committee goes on continuously; the supply of new scientific films continues at an increasing rate, and the Committee has its hands full in keeping up. About eight films per month are appraised by suitably composed viewing panels convened by the Committee. These appraisals are issued to members of S.F.A.; they also form the basis for future supplements to the General Catalogue.

Other developments have occurred in the fields of Education, Industry and Medicine. The Ministry of Education has sponsored several complete "Visual Units" (each comprising sound-films, silent film, film-strip, wall chart and teacher's handbook); S.F.A.'s Education Committee suggested and nominated advisers on one of these visual units, on *Water Supply* for classroom use. Visual

units were shown and discussed at a Conference on "The Use of the Visual Unit in Education" held by S.F.A. in Manchester in November, 1947, in cooperation with Manchester University and other local bodies.

Also worth noting are the film viewings for science teachers organized by the Education Committee.

In Industry, the possibilities of the scientific film are being increasingly realized. A conference on "Films in Industry" held by S.F.A. in London in March, 1947, under the Chairmanship of Sir Stephen Tallents was attended by over 200 representatives of leading industrial concerns. S.F.A. Industrial Committee have also launched a plan for joint sponsorship of industrial training films whereby several firms will share the production costs of a series of films of common interest to all of them. This Committee has also prepared valuable specialized lists of films on such subjects as iron and steel, etc.

In Medicine, a great deal of essential work has been carried out by S.F.A. Medical Committee in classifying the hundreds of amateur, semi-amateur and professional films, many of them in colour, produced during the last twenty years by hospitals, medical schools, firms and private individuals. A catalogue listing over 800 of these films has recently been published jointly by S.F.A. and the Royal Society of Medicine.† A detailed questionnaire has been submitted to medical schools on what teaching films are most needed, and lists of subjects have as a result been published.

Special lists of films have been published by S.F.A. Sciences Committee on such subjects as Mathematics, Astronomy, Agriculture, Biology and Atomic Energy. (Atomic Energy is looked after by a special sub-committee made up jointly of S.F.A. members and members of the Atomic Scientists' Association). The Sciences Committee are also collecting data on research films.

Evidence of increasing interest in scientific films among a wider community during the past few years has been the quick growth of the Scientific Film Society movement. There are at present some 33 local Societies all over the country with a total membership of about 10,000. Their main activity is, of course, the showing of programmes of scientific films, and in the selection and booking of these programmes they are helped by S.F.A., to which most of the Societies are affiliated. Scientific films have been brought recently to a wider audience through B.B.C. television programmes.

We live in an age which daily becomes more science-minded. Atomic energy, vitamins, radar, electronic brains, pilotless planes—these are topics of the day. They have appeared on the screens of our local cinemas in such features as *School for Secrets* and *The Beginning or the End?* (although these two films are perhaps not such good examples of the scientific film as some earlier features like *Madame Curie*).

The ordinary man and woman wants, and needs, to understand as much as possible about the attitude and ways of science—particularly those ways in which it can contribute towards the happiness of the community; and as a link between science and the public the film has a major part to play.

In this article it has only been possible to touch on developments in the industrial, teaching and medical fields, while nothing at all has been said about the international aspect. It is hoped to deal in detail with these subjects in later articles.

* Scientific Film Association, 34, Soho Square, W.C.1, 2s. 9d., post free.

† Obtainable from ASLIB, 52, Bloomsbury St., W.C.1, 7s. 6d.



Swiss Federal Athletic Festival 1947

Dahinden Film, Zurich

THE SCENE IN SWITZERLAND

By

H. H. WOLLENBERG

SWITZERLAND WAS ONE of the first countries in the world to take a serious interest in the cultural aspects of the cinema. There have always been Swiss personalities who considered the cinema something more important than the mere amusement for the leisure time of their domestic servants, something hardly worth thinking about. And there is a press which felt the same way and has been devoting considerable attention to serious film criticism and comment. You ought to look at the film columns of Swiss newspapers rather than at production statistics if you wish to explore the Swiss film scene.

This is also reflected in the existence of an organisation which, so far as I know, is unique in the world: the Swiss Film Chamber (Schweizerische Filmkammer) at Berne. It is the head of all film interests in Switzerland. Under the presidency of M. Antoine Borel, ex-State Chancellor and secretary of the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Public Instruction, its members include representatives of the various branches of the trade, production, distribution and exhibition, as well as representatives of the cine-technicians and employees, the directors and screenwriters.

In addition, apart from the representatives of the film industry, both employers and employees, there are other members representing official bodies connected with various aspects of the cinema. For instance, a representative of the Conference of the Cantonal Police Directors, the director of the Swiss Office of Commercial Expansion, the director of the Swiss Centre for the Promotion of Tourist Traffic and a representative of the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education. Apart from the State and the Trade, the public itself is represented in the Swiss Film Chamber by representatives of filmgoers' and cultural organisations. Here is, in fact, a body which embraces all interests, commercial and non-commercial. A clearing-house and a truly representative centre. No less interesting as the Swiss Film Chamber itself is the chief of its secretariat. You may be surprised (or perhaps not) to learn that this post is filled by a distinguished psychologist, Dr. Hugo Mauerhofer, who considerably contributed to the psychological exploration of cinema-going.

Represented on the Swiss Film Chamber is also the Schweizer Schul & Volkskino (literally: Swiss School and

People's Cinema), Berne, the semi-official, non-profit making centre of educational and instructional film activities. That this centre has now been in operation for no less than 25 years clearly shows how early the importance of the film as a medium of education and information has been recognised in Switzerland. Connected with this institute is the Sub-Standard Film Centre (Schmalfilm Zentrale). Both schools and adult education bodies are also catered for by this centre, and the recently reprinted catalogue of its film library is an impressive document. Then there is the "Bund Schweizerischer Kulturfilm Gemeinden" (Federation of Swiss Cultural Film Societies). It was this organisation which sponsored my own lecture tour. My subject was "Britain Today" and the tour took me to nine different places, larger as well as smaller towns. I thus gained a real and intimate impression of this movement. Screenings of instructional films with or without lectures are organised mainly in cinemas, and 35 mm. prints are used. Film matinées of this type are in many towns a regular institution on Sunday mornings, when the local cinema is hired for the purpose; but shows are also arranged on weekday evenings as a change and interruption of the usual theatre programme. Members of the Cultural Film Societies pay their subscription; non-members pay an admission rate which is a little higher. There is a Cultural Film Society almost everywhere, usually presided over by professors, teachers and those interested in adult education. They co-operate with the local "Volkschhochschule" (people's university), as those further education bodies are named. I was surprised to find a "Volkshochschule" even in a charming, old little place of no more than 3,000-odd inhabitants. Its members and supporters filled the local cinema of 250 seats to capacity. The technical and administrative side, including publicity, supply of prints, booking, etc., etc., is carried out from the centre at Berne. Its very active and enthusiastic managing director, Mr. M. R. Hartmann, assured me that the Swiss School and People's Cinema is a self-supporting organisation. The delegates from the local Cultural Film Societies meet at certain intervals and ultimately decide on the programmes prepared by the management for a season. A film lecture on "Britain Today" had been submitted earlier in the year and found the ready approval of the delegates. The decision seems justified on the strength of my own experience. The attendance as well as the reaction by applause and the reports in the local newspapers betrayed the lively interest the Swiss are taking in contemporary Britain. The films shown and interpreted were the British Council film *General Election*, which had a topical appeal at a time when the Swiss themselves were just going to the polling stations; *Cumberland Story*, illustrating industrial, and *Children on Trial*, dealing with educational and social problems. It was obvious that all the audiences appreciated the chance to see the face of the real England, the man in the street and how he lives, the miner at the coalface, the worker, how they vote in England and how their social services are administered. The National-Zeitung, Basle, in its review of the matinée, put it like this: "Dignified lords, wigs, stiff and highhanded butlers, London black-out and ingenious Nazi agents—that is the Hollywood version of England. We therefore welcome all the more the attempt of Dr. Wollenberg of London to show us the Britain of today, the Britain as it really is in a most impressive and entertaining manner." "Basler Nachrichten" concluded its review: "Both works (*General Election* and *Cumberland Story*) are

renewed proof of the high qualities of the British documentary production", and "Vaterland", Lucerne, wrote: "We would recommend both films to our filmmakers not for mere imitation, but for careful study".

While this organisation, as we have seen, is exclusively engaged in film as a medium of knowledge, there are other groups which, more similar to the film societies in Britain, are devoted to the film as an art medium. Such film clubs or film guilds, as they are styled, exist in most of the major towns. While the centre of the former is in Berne, the latter have their centre at Basle, where the Film Archive is accommodated. Basle is a strikingly progressive place. The Basle film conferences and film weeks have for years borne witness to its awareness of the phenomenon of cinema and its problems. A man who largely contributed to this is Dr. Georg Schmidt, curator of the Basle Art Museum, equally famous for its Holbein and other treasures as for its architecture and lay-out. He represents the filmgoers' organisations in the Swiss Film Chamber. The press, too, has been and is playing its part, represented by journalists such as Dr. Heinrich Kuhn, now foreign editor of the National-Zeitung, Basle, and guiding spirit behind the film congresses, or Dr. Paul Bloch, of the Basler Nachrichten newspaper, a man whose understanding and appreciation of the contemporary British cinema is clearly evident from his comments.

Characteristic of the progressive spirit in Basle is a so far unique venture of its Department of Education. It concerns regular weekly entertainment film shows officially arranged for children between the ages of 11 and 16 as part of their school education, a scheme which began to operate in October. Its announcement by the Education authority seems so interesting that extracts are worth quoting:

"Children under the age of 16 are on principle prohibited from going to the cinema by law. Much as this rule is justified, it can achieve its purpose only partially, namely to protect children from the bad influences of the cinema. This way children are not equipped with the means to distinguish between the good and the bad, the clean and the not-so-clean in films. It is thus left to chance in most cases which are to be the first and strongest impressions of a youngster once he has reached the age-limit of 16. In addition, it should be remembered that by merely prohibiting cinemagoing, the educationally and artistically good influences of the cinema are also kept from youth . . . The Department of Education, in view of the great importance of the cinema, have reached the conclusion that it is in the public interest that our youth should be prepared for the cinema. In order to educate children and adolescents early in the appreciation of good films and in order to influence their first film experiences, the Department of Education, as an experiment, are organising screenings of selected entertainment films from current productions for children between the ages of 11 and 16 every Wednesday afternoon. An expert is to give a short introduction on the purpose and contents of each film . . . It is to be hoped that the influence of bad films can be minimised through the good film in this manner, just as it was possible to replace penny dreadfuls more and more by good juvenile literature".

On the other hand, film clubs and film guilds, as against the cultural film societies, have, I understand, to face far greater problems than their opposite numbers in Britain in respect of securing suitable films. The reason, it seems, is to be found in the fact that as a film market Switzerland is a "closed shop". There exists an exhibitors' association of



Matto Rebiert ("Matto Rules")

Praesens-Films

which one has to be a member; otherwise one cannot obtain a film from any renter. And there is a renters' organisation which works on the corresponding line; in other words, no exhibitor is allowed to show films of a renter who is not a member. Such is the arrangement operating between these two trade organisations. A recent case may be mentioned which is illustrative of the "closed shop" position. Mr. Jean Stoll, of Basle, a highly reputed distributor and former vice-president of the renters' association, formed a new company, Victor Films, for the purpose of distributing the productions of the J. A. Rank Organisation. When the new firm applied for membership to the renters' organisation, it was rejected by 18 votes against 12. This was by no means a demonstration against British pictures, but just against a new competitor. Mr. Stoll had to purchase an existing member company in order to straighten the matter out.

Those sections of the public who take a serious interest in the cinema as a cultural factor were represented by and co-ordinated in the Swiss Film League. To quote only two instances, such organisations as the Swiss Teachers' Union and the People's Catholic Society are represented in this organisation.

Turning from non-commercial to commercial film exhibition, the Swiss cinemas, probably more than those of any other country, afford an opportunity of viewing—and comparing—the productions of almost all countries. Although American product keeps the greater share of screentime, it is not nearly so large as in most other countries,

and there is ample space for quite a few French and Italian films to be shown. Some German films, too, are being screened. They are strictly "non-propaganda" subjects, chiefly the Viennese romantic type, carefully selected from pre-1945 stocks. However, a post-war German film, too, has already made its appearance, Käutner's *In Former Days*, made under a British licence. British films, unfortunately, have lately not been playing the part on the Swiss screen one should expect on account of their quality. This situation, which was regretted by every Swiss I talked with, should soon improve. On November 1st, while I was there, the newest and largest cinema of Zurich was opened with *A Matter of Life and Death*. It was a really representative and spectacular occasion, introducing a new phase for the British film in Switzerland. Distribution of Rank productions, as mentioned above, has now been placed into very capable hands, and Korda's new films, too, are about to make their appearance there.

As for Swiss production, feature film making is essentially carried on by one company, Praesens Films, who won themselves an international reputation with *Marie-Louise* and even more with *The Last Chance*. Only one new Praesens film has been shown since, *Matto Rules*. It is less ambitious than its predecessor. The dialogue is in the Swiss dialect, an indication that the film was not made with ambitions for international showing. Within its limitations it is an interesting subject, set in the mental home at Randlingen in Switzerland, directed by Leopold (*Last Chance*) Lindtberg and with the fine Swiss character actor Heinrich

Gretler in the leading part. With its current production the company has returned to its successful tradition of semi-documentaries of the *The Last Chance* type. The author of the latter, Richard Schweizer, wrote the scenario of a film on the fate of the displaced children of Europe. A Czech boy plays the leading part and all the other children have been chosen from twelve different UNRRA camps. The professional artists are Jarmila Novotna, Aline MacMahon and Montgomery Clift; the director, too, came from America, Fred Zinnemann, of *The Seventh Cross* fame.

As compared with this sporadic feature production, educational and documentary production is lively and on a broader scale. There are quite a few companies or units at work on short films, which are mainly sponsored by industrial or Government interests. A documentary released through the Swiss School and People's Cinema organisation is a film I saw on the Federal Athletic Festival, 1947, produced by Josef Dahinden, who has specialised in sport and nature documentaries of a fine standard. Another festival, the International Music Festival at Lucerne, is the subject of a documentary made by Gloria Films, Zurich; it was awarded a prize at Cannes. Other prizes were

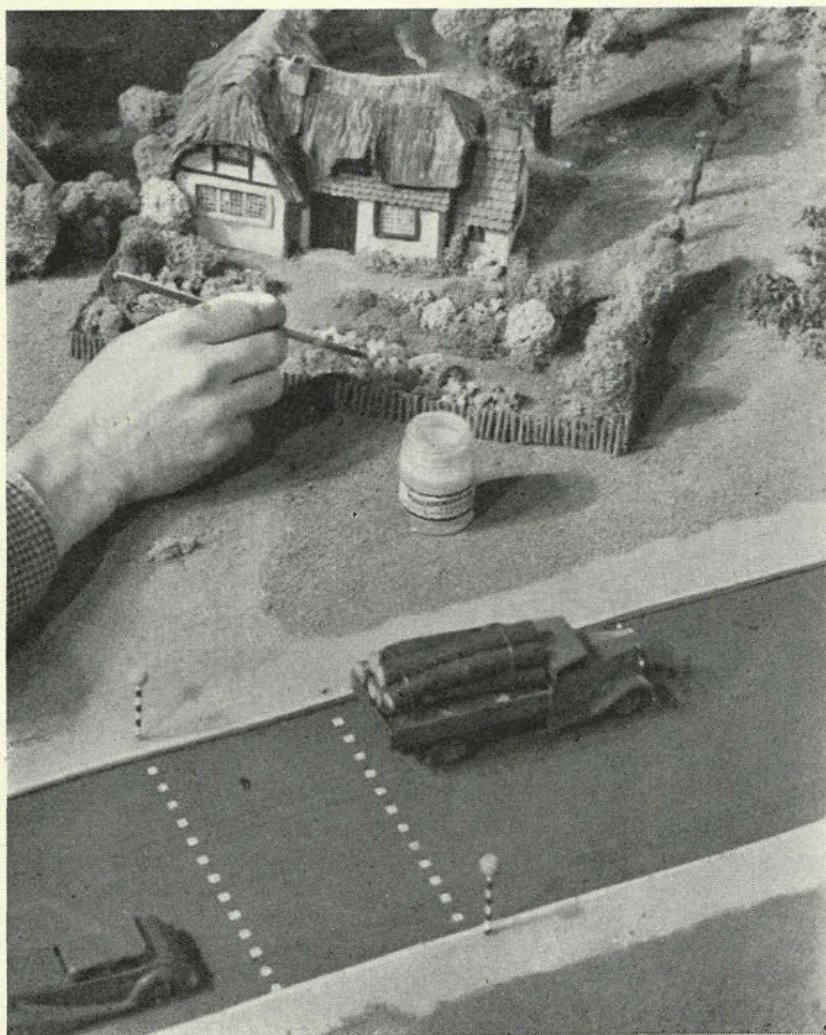
awarded to films made by this company at Venice. Of recent Gloria Film documentaries made by producer Dr. A. Forter, I would like to mention those made for the Union of Railwaymen; *Children in Distress*, made in Holland for the Swiss Red Cross; *The Miracle of the Telephone*; a film on national old-age pensions and widows' and orphans' insurance; other subjects deal with the youth movement, with pre-military training or with the internment of foreign troops in Switzerland during the recent war years. A subject being prepared is a film dealing with the dangers of alcoholic intoxication for youth. Production activities of the more recently formed Iris Film, Swiss Cultural Film Corporation, I found, were also promising. Here I met Dr. Nicholas Kaufmann, in charge of production, who, a Swiss citizen, won his international reputation in the world of the scientific film by his many years of work with the Ufa Cultural Film Department. A film on the formation, movement and dissolution of mountain mist and ground fog, and another meteorological film on clouds and weather forecasting may be especially mentioned from the company's first line-up of six scientific films. Dr. Martin Rikli, the renowned expert, wrote and photographed the films, employing completely new techniques.

A BRITISH PUPPET FILM

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

This little film, the first made by Signal Films, although somewhat jerky, has considerable appeal. It was made under very difficult conditions and the script was framed to teach children how to cross the road in safety. Very definite progress has been made since the earlier Puppet Films and the animation is greatly improved by using only one model for each character instead of the very large number previously employed in other Puppet films. The models have a wire basis and a special plastic combination is used for the hands and fingers. The faces are detachable so that the one model can be used for the number of different expressions required. In the very short running time of the film, it was obvious that improvement had been made in the animation and the rather jerky movement of the puppets was barely noticeable in the last sequence.

These pioneers have immense enthusiasm. Len Lye (in a different technique) and George Pal have paved the way, and it is to be hoped that British skill in this difficult but delightful form of film will shortly be equal to the world's best.





Zulu Paradise

NATIVE WAR DANCE (TRANSVAAL)

Jens Bjerre

FILMING THE AFRICAN NATIVE

By

JENS BJERRE

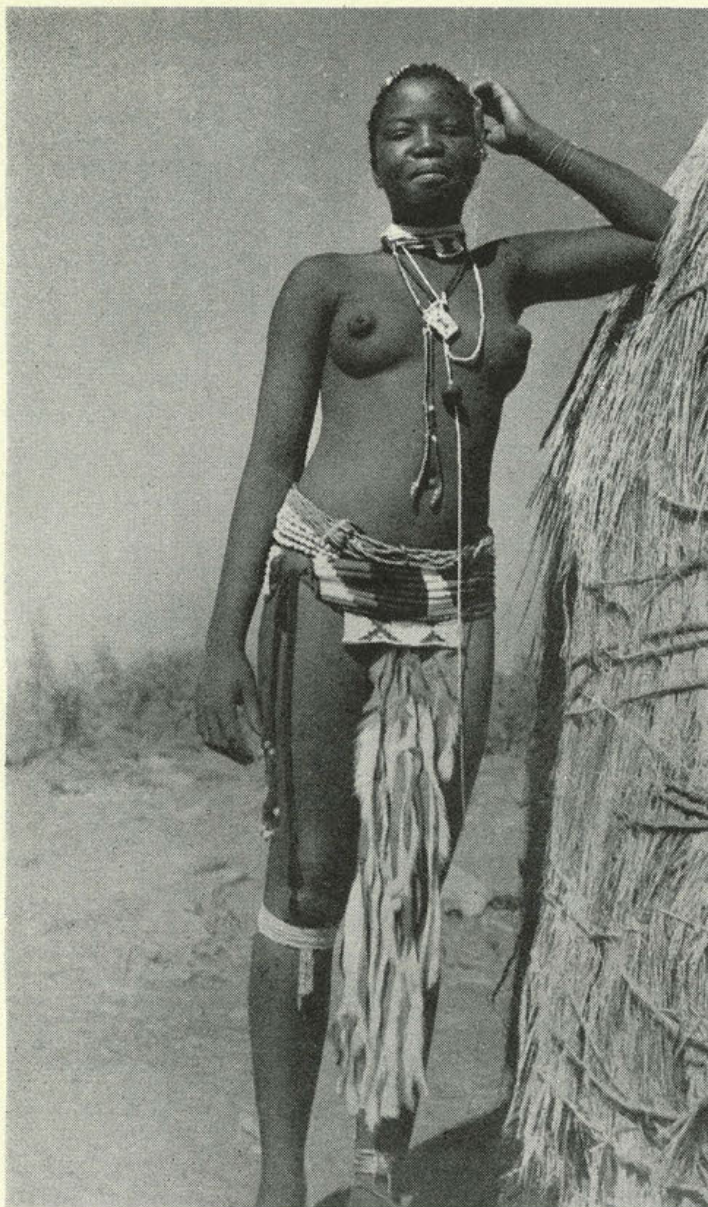
TO GET PRIMITIVE NATIVE PEOPLE to act naturally before the camera is more a question of psychology than of instruction. I learned that very often during a year's travel in Africa during which I made two full length documentary colour films.

To film modern life in the cities, the gold- and diamond-mines and the plantations was more a matter of routine and technique. But to give a really true picture of primitive native life was another matter entirely and a much more difficult task.

The first of the two documentary films mentioned I called *Africa—From Cairo to Cape*. In this film, giving glimpses of the whole African continent to-day, I had to cover the activity of civilization, the progress of develop-

ment, the most striking sceneries, the Pyramids, the Sahara, the Nile, Kilimanjaro, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe Ruins, Congo Caves, Table Mountain, wild animal-life in the jungle, and the primitive native life in "darkest Africa".

This dark Africa only exists to-day in the most remote corners of the continent. I found it in Bushmanland, in the Kalahari-Desert and in the Okavango Swamp in Bechuanaland. Together with two Catholic missionaries I went with two diesel-engined lorries from the little village Grootfontein in South West Africa over the sand dunes of the Kalahari and Kaukauveld up to the Okavango territory between South West Africa, Angola and Bechuanaland. It was a long and hard journey over 500 miles of trackless wilderness. Here in Kaukauveld and Kalahari the wandering



"Momane" From the film "Zulu Paradise" by Jens Bjerre

bushmen families are left to themselves, no white man being allowed to enter these territories without a special permit, and then only at his own risk. These bushmen represent the stone age in Africa. They exist in the desert where no other human beings can live. They kill game with their poisoned arrows, and they make their fire by rubbing together two sticks. During the war the bushmen killed two air-force men who made a forced landing in the Kalahari—the stone-age men killed men from the atom-age. Once they inhabited the whole world. Now they are Africa's "living fossils"—and have almost disappeared as a racial unit.

The first problem was to contact these strange people. The missionaries, Brother Ebert and Brother Schebel, knew a lonely waterhole in the desert where some of the bushmen families used to live and hunt in the dry seasons. Nearly 200 miles into the wilderness we reached the spot and made a camp.

Next morning we saw our bushmen. While we were eating our breakfast one of the boys said: "We are watched

by hidden eyes". At Brother Ebert's advice we just sat waiting. After half an hour the first two of these small savages approached. Cautiously the naked figures covered only by a little piece of skin came closer. Their weapons, bow and poisoned arrows, were left behind them. They squatted down and waited. "Don't start filming yet", the missionaries said to me. We offered them some tobacco—and the spell was broken.

Then came the problem of filming them. To understand their language with all its clicks was impossible. First I turned the movie-camera towards myself to show that it was not a dangerous thing. I smiled joyfully when it was running, and so did Brother Ebert when I turned it towards him. Then I took a series of close-up shots of the wrinkled faces of the bushmen.

The next thing was to get some glimpses of their daily life. After long negotiations and gesticulations we tried to arrange a hunting scene—but we had to give it up. They refused because they were not hungry! They had just killed a buck in the morning and had a big feast, we guessed from their gesticulations. Then one of our boys and I walked after the bushmen a few miles over the sand dunes to their living place. There were not even real huts, just a cover of grass and a few sticks. There were about twenty bushmen living here. By help of endless patience and tobacco we succeeded in taking some shots of their primitive life.

It was late in the afternoon and I knew that the bushmen like all other native tribes love to dance and that they usually begin their dancing at sunset. So I told the boy to perform one of his tribal dances for the bushmen. That was very effective. They laughed and at once started a dance of their own. They have the most primitive dance and music ever known—clapping of happy hands and stamping of feet. Primitive—but fascinating in its simpleness. All the while this took place I, of course, was busy with my camera. Instruction would have been of no use here. The bushmen soon became so engaged in their dance that I could go in between them and take close-ups while they were dancing. Every scene I got of the bushmen life was authentic and natural—caught in lucky moments.

We continued our journey up to the Okavango swamps. The natives here live in a very primitive state, and it was often difficult to film their life. Some of them knew from the missionaries what a still-photo camera was, they had seen photographs. But they did not know anything about movie-pictures, so therefore they always stopped, struck an attitude and looked very seriously into the camera-eye, as soon as they heard it running. It took a very long time to release them from this complex.

But there were some pleasant surprises. It sometimes happened that a little fat Okavango baby would yawn in the most charming and funny way right before the camera. Or a beautiful native girl would suddenly come across with a basket on her head, moving with a harmony no Hollywood star could rival. One really had to be ready with the camera every second of the day to take advantage of such occasions. If it was "arranged" the girl would be shy and have a most serious expression on her face instead of a happy smile and a song.

It was amazing how conditions varied in filming the various native tribes. It all depended on their standard in the human scale. The most primitive bushmen were in a



Bushmen in the Kaukauveld

Jens Bjerre

way easy to deal with because they did not know at all what was going on. For them it was just a play. The Okavangos were more difficult because they could not grasp the difference between still-photography and movie-filming. When I later went to Zululand in order to make a complete film of Zulu life in the native reserves it was entirely different again. Most of the adult Zulus knew what a movie picture was. They had either heard about it or seen one of the native departments' instructional films about how to prevent cattle disease or soil erosion or similar subjects. But with the Zulus it was even more a question of psychology than on any of the previous occasions.

A native commissioner gave me useful advice before I entered the big Ekutuleni native reserve. "Don't start filming at once", he said. "You must learn to know the people first, and they must have confidence in you. Try to learn the most common sentences of their language. The Zulus are a very proud race, and you must treat them with respect, authority and friendliness". He was right. I did not start filming before I had been in the reserve for a couple of weeks. Altogether I stayed in the native reserve for three months and so I became quite familiar to all the

natives there. Most of the film I took in Prins Pika Zulu kraal, where a hut was placed at my disposal.

The main thing was to have a personal contact with the natives and to make the filming a favour for them and a play. Small gifts such as tobacco, snuff and beads were always welcome. I had to write the script day by day and to alter it very often according to the conditions. Once I had made arrangements for filming a scene where a Zulu woman is consulting a witchdoctor. But as soon as she saw the camera she ran away, being afraid that her soul would disappear into the camera. I had to find another witchdoctor.

But my greatest disappointment was Momane. She was a beautiful Zulu girl aged 14. She was the "star" in the film and she was wonderful, laughing, singing, dancing, smiling all the time. It was a happy play for her. But suddenly she lost interest. She had no more time for filming, she said, as she had to work in the fields with the other girls. It was absolutely impossible to get her to play again. She had decided that it was no longer interesting, and I had to replace the "star".

But, nevertheless, with all its ups and downs and unexpected disappointments, it was an interesting and wonderful experience to come in contact with the primitive African natives, to study their life and to film them.



Vagabonds of Europe

Mafirt Productions

HUNGARY STARTS AGAIN

By

PAUL SHERIDAN

A BUDAPEST FILM DIRECTOR, whose name I do not know and do not want to know, has made what passes for a documentary—all about reconstruction in Budapest. As far as this contributor is concerned, the city might have been London, Prague or Vienna. There was nothing expressively Magyar about the film, which was badly conceived and unimaginatively photographed.

Streets of bombed buildings, half-built bridges spanning a river—State-less streets and any river you care to name. It is a film so *ordinary* that not a single item in it stands out for comment. As this is one of the most recent of the documentaries, it does not augur well for the future. Budapest is a city of skeletons. Stand where you will on either bank of the Danube, and as far as the eye can reach all the torments of destruction call out from the naked buildings; churches, shops and houses by the thousand

that slowly are being clothed in bricks and mortar, sheltered from winds and rains with slates and timber; a ripe and ready subject for a living film. They have made a very dead one.

There are 520 cinemas in Hungary and, at the time of writing, all films are distributed to these cinemas by the four political parties—Communist, Social Democrat, Small-holders and Peasant Party—each party having its own chain of cinemas. Distribution in this way protects any film from financial loss.

This is a particularly good arrangement as far as Russian films are concerned, because Soviet productions are not popular; even a first class film like *The Stone Flower* did not half fill the cinema in which I saw it.

The three big floors of the Hunnia Film Studios at Budapest are well equipped, although much of the machinery is out of date and not likely to be replaced with anything



Vagabonds of Europe

Mafirt Productions

more modern for some time to come. The Hungarians are hoping to turn out 25 films per year, as against 40 before the war. The Government is helping the industry with long-term "loans", repayment of which is not expected until all expenses are cleared. These "loans" are only given to films that are passed as "of artistic merit" by an official Culture Council. It must be said here that there is no question of political considerations one way or the other influencing their recommendations or rejections. There appears to be a very real and active desire on the part of this Council to discover and give every possible assistance to new ideas.

The first important big picture made in Hungary since the war (it is believed to have box office possibilities abroad), is called *Vagabonds of Europe*. Produced by "Mafirt Productions" at Hunnia studios, the story is written and the film directed by Geza Radvanyi. From an English point of view the story has its dangers in that its main theme is of the sentimental variety. The following is a brief summary. The war has ravaged the soil of Europe and the highways are teeming with gangs of homeless, displaced children who know neither class nor country, who live by their wits and savagery. The particular gang with which the film deals numbers a score, roaming about under the leadership of their oldest member. They come across an old castle, abandoned except for an old man whose life has been given to music. The old man's personality is such that the wild youths stay with him, and, if I may be

allowed to quote the film hand-out, "he, with the help of his music, leads them back into the life of Society".

The dangers I spoke of should now be obvious. I cannot be more exact about the fulfilment of my fears because the film was only partly shot when I left Budapest. The masculine lead (the old musician) is played by Arthur Somlay, who has something of the Lionel Barrymore technique in his declining days. The leader of the gang, played by Miklos Gabor, one of the great hopes of the reborn Hungarian theatre, has an early Mickey Rooney look about him but plays the part with admirable sensitivity and an indefinable disciplined wildness. This young man is 24 but his acting is mature. The outdoor shots of this film were taken in and around the ruins of an old castle in the Bakoni mountains and the photography is unquestionably magnificent. These Dead End Kids of Hungary are shown for the pitiful little mites they are against backgrounds of torrential storms and cloud-packed skies that dwarf their petty thievings to proper proportions.

I have said that Russian films are not popular in Hungary, but this is not necessarily a reflection. They are quite plainly fed up with war films and propaganda of any kind, and it must be said that Hungarian cinema audiences have very little critical capacity. (This also applies to theatre and opera audiences.) A list of the most popular films shown in Budapest during the past eighteen months would include *Phantom of the Opera*, *White Cliffs of Dover*, *Arabian Nights Entertainment*, *Mrs Miniver*—the biggest success



The Waxworks Show

Hunnia

ON CARTS AND HORSES

By

D. A. YERRILL

IT IS EVIDENT that Joe Public still has the film-makers by the nose, leading them into new, or not-so-new, sludgy by-paths every day.

How often in the history of cinema has a film been made which has stimulated to the extent of giving a lead to public taste? And how often, on the other hand, has just another one rolled off the production line, machine-made to tried specifications, cast-moulded and die-stamped, to pander to the unformed, uninstructed selectivity of the mass of lazy humanity?

The film has propagated itself like an amœba. In the beginning there was a film about which a section of the public liked something, giving tangible evidence of the fact at the box office. Another section of the public liked something else about the same film; therefore, in the best tradition of reasoning venality, two more films were blue-printed and assembled, one to seduce each section. And this has gone on, and on, until now, when we must be nearing the millennium, for statistics show that in 1946, 56 out of every 100 films made in the United States were horse operas.

It is interesting to trace the genealogy of some of the fair-haired youngsters of the film family. For example, we have *Brief Encounter*, a bonny, bouncing boy. His grandfather was old man Let's-leer-at-somebody-else's-drawing-room theatre, complete with noises off and ill-timed entrances; his mother, Dame Symphonia Synthetics, complete with coda of women's voices, naggando, and a neat but hokum paralleling, point by point, of the Big World's round with the daily and trivial one of Mrs. Smith and Mr. Brown; and his father the Hyrcanian Bore of middle-class morality which one thought had been slain by Hercules Shaw. Nevertheless, the film had symphonic beauty, albeit

of all—*The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, *The Four Feathers*, *Henry V* and *A Matter of Life and Death*. It is interesting to note the number of old films. *Henry V* was not regarded as a war film but as a story about a king of England who fell in love with a French girl!

American films are very popular and the American Motion Picture Corporation have a strong hold on their new customer. Despite a flattering admiration for the English people, British films are not popular, and the reason is not far to seek. The average Hungarian has had enough to worry about since the end of the war. All he asks from the film is that it shall take him away, right away for a couple of hours, and let him forget. Understanding this attitude, one realises the penalties. It is quite plainly up to Hungarian film directors and producers to tackle this inertia and feed their mentally starved audience with the proper food.

pattern-made, voted for, and readily acceptable to a culture-hungry public. It also had realism, plenty of realism—of the kind that is so broadly caricatured that it cannot be missed by a high-gravel blind æsthete with a towel over his eyes. Another fleet-footed child, foster-mothered to suffocation by the mob at the Kulchadrome, was *Henry V*; a bit of a throwback this, he had Shakespeare's forehead. There were a lot of nice characteristics—but no character; it lacked the integrity instilled in his brain-children by its great ancestor with his stern hand. *Henry V* represents the sort of result that occurs when amateurs set out to melt down a vessel of pure gold for sovereigns.

Meanwhile Cinema, with a till in one hand and a barometer in the other, threads her way through the throng in the market-place and presently reports to her servitors: "This is what the public wants—give it to 'em while the mood is on 'em".

Of course there are economic ends to be served; and now more than ever before must the British product outclass and outsell its counterparts. But the public is not so dim, not so lethargic, not so gullible as Cinema believes. It is not a big baby that must be pampered and soothed to prevent it throwing porridge. Rather is it a healthy adolescent, human, impressionable; but which needs a firm lead. It needs to be stimulated, too; it wants digging in the ribs, guidance, a sense of proportion and a hope for the future. Where is new hope discoverable now? In the press? In the dead and dying theatres? In the psychological novel? Or in the cinema? It could be. It could be if somebody would jump up on the rostrum, baton in hand, instead of trying to direct the orchestra from the back of the pit. Of course our films are popular; of course they love 'em and lap 'em up and come streaming back for more. Sympathy

could do no less; sympathy, sentiment, and self-pity. But the noticeable thing about these abstracts is that they are only apparently static—just as the habitual cinema-going public is apparently static. Continually repeated successes give diminishing returns. They may not do so obviously in point of number, but in the longest runs they will do so in the things that matter most, like goodwill, and the quality of the goodwill.

In the nineteen-twenties cinema was pronounced, by one of the foremost thinkers of the day, a destructive social force. He spoke at a time when technical advances had outstripped their inventors and controllers, and the men behind the films were a carnivorous canaille of barkers and mountebanks. Cinema was mainly patronised from the lowest levels; and these levels formed standards on which future films were based. *Never since that time has the cinema been able to rely on large audiences of sufficiently high selective quality to guarantee sound judgment and the formation of a standard for good taste.*

LACK OF SOUND EXPERIMENT

Eventually one of two things will happen. Either due to lack of the stimulus that is provided by leadership born of sound experiment cinema audiences will fall off sharply; or all taste will be dragged down to the low standard originally formed by the vicious circle of "I like it"—"You shall have it"; and in the absence of any art form to compete with cinema in popular appeal the leviathan of canned art will go down with all hands and all passengers. Yes, in that case cinema would be lost—would die as surely as a radio programme dies after we know all its characters and all its jokes—the difference being that cinema would not rise again—it is too big for that. But the former supposition seems the most likely—the film-makers' fear of experiment due to cash-register palsy is notorious—but it presupposes that the innate taste of audiences as a mass is sufficiently high for them to avoid being fooled all the time. This is perhaps not too much to presume, for, after all, audiences, no matter how composed, must judge from the standards that come naturally to them; they will eventually know that they are being "fed" and doped after the careless nonsense of the majority of the press critics and the deliberate hoo-ha of film promoters has begun to sound in their ears like brass and tinkling cymbals. To the run of humanity it is not natural to judge by reason alone—and criticism and publicity make appeal to nothing else. In the end human instinct will realise something is wrong; a cry of stinking fish will go up and the cinemas will empty for the last time.

Lack of sound experiment. That means lack of experiment that is instinctively right—quickly right—every time. Lack of men who can guess right repeatedly and continually as the circle of men around John Grierson guessed right in their Canadian adventure. If cinema is going to pay—really pay, rather than pay off to the few—if it is going to take its rightful place as an art form, leading opinion and not following it, giving ideas, serving the ends of humanity in the ways that the arts of all the ages have done, then cinema-going must become "the done thing". Into the cinemas must be attracted that section of the public, a section traceable to no particular social stratum, whose faculties have not been atrophied by sentiment, and by self-pity which is the mirror image of sympathy. This is

the section that is not found in the cinema to-day. At one time, a part of it, in view of the dearth of other forms of art, in view of the hysteria of *surréalisme* that invaded poetry and painting, the apathy that invaded the theatre, visited the cinema and was bored to tears by repetition after repetition of synthetics and sickly sentiment. It even turned the other cheek when it seemed as if a breath of fresh air had passed through the film world and it read that new leaves had been turned. But it left the cinemas for a longer period when it saw rehashes of novels and plays that it remembered with affection; thousands of feet of psychological clap-trap in a miserably dated tradition; corny "realism" that passed for sincerity. The film makers do not worry, they probably, almost certainly, do not notice; but the fact remains that their position is becoming analogous to that of the Hyde Park orator with one argument repeated and repeated with variations, and then repeated without variations, like a continually playing fugue. Their audience consists of what amounts to a few—measured from a point of view of good taste, a very few—cheering sympathisers.

AND OF LEADERSHIP

Of course, the new era of the British cinema has produced films that are good—a lot of them are very good—very good in the tradition they have just created. But the tradition is bad. In this connection it might be interesting to quote Allan A. Michie, writing in "The Minneapolis Sunday Times":—

"Rank is genuinely upset when elements of indecency or crudeness get into his films. Take the case of *The Wicked Lady*, a shoddy Restoration costume drama which he has publicly regretted making. He had carefully deleted lines and scenes he considered offensive. Even then he approved the production only on condition that the movie, as distinct from the book from which it was taken, introduce a 'good lady' to counterbalance the wicked one.

"It was completed while Rank was in the United States, and on his return he was shocked to find that crude lines had slipped into the film. He was inclined to suppress it, but he had spent more than \$1,000,000 on its production and the business-man in him triumphed. The fact that *The Wicked Lady* broke many box office records in Britain and elsewhere only strengthened Rank's determination to give movie-goers the uplift they may not know they need".

Here is a tear-jerking portrait of an idealist . . .

The film world woefully lacks a sound and courageous leadership; a leadership based on ideals that will stand up before normally intelligent audiences composed of human beings. Generations bred on wars and technical advancements cannot be fooled by artistic humbug and synthetics.

Cinema is the art form of our age. It was born of our age; it looks as though we are stuck with it. Leaving aside for the moment the undeniable achievements of the documentary school, it is submitted that the citadel is in the hands of worse than Huns. For the sake of the twenty-to-thirty-year-olds of 1955, there has got to be a couple of deposings and a usurpation or two. As Robert Newton said in *Yellow Sands*, "What we want is a bloody revolution".



La Virgen Que Forjo Una Patria

Films Mundiales

RELIGIOUS FILMS OF MEXICO

By

RAYMOND DEL CASTILLO

THE MEXICAN of to-day is the most polyglot of people, uniting ancient cultures with a modern outlook, with a vein of religious faith amounting almost to mysticism, a faith finding expression in the elaborate religious rituals for which the country is famous. A nation saturated with widespread religious traditions, deeply tinged with Christian influences but not quite enough to obscure the ancient Pagan festivals on which many of their modern counterparts are based, such as the Annual Festival of the Poppies, held on the Friday before Holy Week in the town of Santa Anita, dedicated to the Virgin of the Sorrows, but in actual fact corresponding to the Spring Feast of the Aztecs.

This deep religious feeling proved too strong for the anti-clerical forces of a few years ago. The authorities discovered the impossibility of smothering the deepest emotions of a people under a blanket of edicts and restrictions and were forced, eventually, to give way.

Religious motifs are the dominating factors of Mexican life and, as the cinema, usually quite unconsciously, absorbs the characteristics permeating national life, it was only natural that the rescinding of the anti-clerical measures would turn film producers to the expression of religious themes and ideas.

This has brought about a degree of development in a filmic school notable for the pitfalls of easily offended susceptibilities and easily detected insincerities. Not here the paste and cardboard spectacle of *The King of Kings* and *The Ten Commandments*; not here either, unfortunately, the naïve beauty of *The Green Pastures*, or the majesty of *Golgotha*, although the essential simplicity, and even the superstition, of the peon as expressed in the group religious experiences of the festivals, is captured in many of these films.



St. Francis de Asis

Calderon Films

Most famous of them all is the Festival of the Virgin of Guadalupe, held in a suburb of the capital from December 9th-12th. For four days the work of making and painting crosses goes on, then, on the night of the 11th every chapel is packed with people who, at 4 a.m., serenade the Virgin of Guadalupe. On the morning of the 12th the crosses are put in place to the accompaniment of songs and dances. During the whole of this long ceremony a bell is tolled in the square, regularly every few minutes.

A LEGEND AND A FILM

The origins of this ceremony date back to the earliest days of the Spanish conquest, when Juan Diego, a poor Indian, was converted to the Christian faith after beholding a vision of the Virgin on the hill of Tepeyac.

This story and the ceremony have served as the basis for a large number of films. *La Reina de Mexico* was a full-length documentary. *La Virgin Que Forjo Una Patria*, based on the legend, had a fine cast headed by Ramon

Novarro, Domingo Soler of Mexico's famous acting dynasty, and Gloria Marin, a beautiful and talented actress, but the film, despite some beautiful visuals, was not a good one. It was left to Gabriel Soria, a Hollywood trained producer-director who won five annual awards in succession between 1938 and 1942 as the country's best director, to produce the moving *La Virgin Morena*, a film widely distributed in the United States as *The Virgin of Guadalupe*.

La Virgin Morena, produced in 1943, was adapted by Soria and Alberto Santandar, the co-producer, from a story by Father Carlos Herida, the historian of the Shrine of Guadalupe. A certain fictional element was woven into the original legend, but the conflict between the Aztecs and the Conquistadores was handled with dignity and restraint. A fine musical background was composed by Juan Carillo, the inventor of the musical process known as "Sound 13", and an impressive rendering of the difficult role of Juan Diego came from Jose Luis Jimenez.

Jimenez followed this film with another portrait of spiritual grace in *San Francisco de Asis*, directed by Tito



La Virgen Que Forjo Una Patria

Films Mundiales

Gout, and produced by Pedro A. Calderon, responsible for a number of films based on the lives of the Saints, *San Juan Bosco* and *San Antonio de Padua*. *San Francis de Asis*, recently exhibited at the Locarno International Film Festival, is the best of these. The mixture of reverence and wild romance in the life of the Italian saint, although the director was happiest in his handling of the later scenes, came through with clarity, and the film was a huge success in Mexico and has been widely distributed through religious organisations in other countries. Unfortunately, Jiminez, of whom great things had been expected after these two compelling portraits, has since been cast in unworthy parts in conventional films, playing subsidiary to inferior players.

The most recent of the religious films to be exhibited is *Maria Magdalena*, completed at the end of 1946 by the veteran producer-director, Miguel Contreras Torres. This story, which has been called "the most significant cycle of events in history", is not wholly successful or happy in its transference to the screen, particularly when certain facets of the story are eliminated entirely without satisfactory explanation.

For the leading role the director discovered a new actress Medea de Novea, who is, unfortunately, handicapped by an obvious lack of experience from being completely happy in an exacting role. On the other hand, Luis Alcoriza, who gave an impressive cameo in *La Virgen Morena*, has been cast as Jesus of Nazareth and, aided by some remarkable make-up, gives a fine performance. In an effort to recapture the barbaric splendour of the Roman epoch, the art direction has sometimes had unhappy results, and what should have looked barbaric merely looks like the doodlings of a bored child, but when all criticisms have been made, the film is still a creditable effort which does not quite succeed.

The most recent plan to produce a religious film came from Clasa Films Mundiales, the largest producing company, who had hoped to make *San Felipe de Jesus*, a screen biography of the Mexican boy saint who was tortured to death in the sixteenth century, produced on the highest budget ever set for a Mexican film. Unfortunately, certain aspects of the story could not pass the censor, and unless modifications can be made without harming the impact of the story, the film will be abandoned.

SYNTHETIC STARS

By

OSWELL BLAKESTON

THE BUSINESS OF EXPORT is complicated in the film industry by the business of dialogue; and ever since the film found tongue, experts have been working to perfect systems of dubbing to regain certain foreign markets. And now, when the whole film world is under revision, it is perhaps worth considering the questions which have been raised by dubbing problems—questions which ought to affect the future.

Dubbed films have been violently attacked on æsthetic grounds; but few of the attackers realise that, for some years past, eighty-five per cent. of the product of some of the major studios in Hollywood has been post-synchronised. I don't say all of these films have found favour with the critics, but my point is that the critics have not specifically condemned these films because they are post-synchronised. The point is that the critics just have not known anything about the sparing use of direct-track in many important pictures.

Of course post-synchronisation is not the same as dubbing. For post-synchronising, when it is a question of Hollywood features, the artistes keep their own voices on the final sound-track. During the performance, the dialogue is recorded on a guide-track; and the final track is made, when the picture-takes are safely in the can, in a small sound-recording studio where overhead expenses are moderate. Then, in the sound-recording studio, the guide-track is run through, and the artistes repeat their lines for the final track. With one or two play-backs of the guide-track, which is recorded simply and without attention to correct levels of speech, artistes find they have no difficulty in recapturing the tempo and mood of dialogue.

So it's easy to see why Hollywood took to post-synchronisation, as it saves a tremendous amount of time in the big studio where overheads are colossal. With the guide-track technique, tricky rehearsals for the boom operator are eliminated. Again, if the mike can be stuck in any corner where it is out of the way, time is not wasted by the lighting experts over mike shadows. (For some curious reason, the necessary positions for the mike, when it is recording direct and not guide-track, are always positions of disadvantage for the camera crew.)

Perhaps, though, it isn't so easy to admit that Hollywood made no artistic sacrifice when it took to post-synchronisation for economy. Yet the truth is that it is quite impossible for an audience to spot good post-synchronising work. The trick—if it can be called a trick—is, at the re-recording session, to split up the guide-track with lengths of blank so that the artistes only have short phrases to re-record. The false note is introduced if artistes attempt to re-record a speech while watching a picture-take of their original lip movements. For good synchronisation and good emotional tone, the artiste must not look at a picture but concentrate on the guide-track tempo. Short phrases make this concentration an easy matter.

Naturally, the critics still have their point that post-

synchronisation gives you, finally, the artiste's own voice. On the other hand, the time-lag between the actual performance and the re-recording of the dialogue seems to me to give a phoney ring to the idea that it is essential for conviction to have direct sound-recording. And yes, I mean conviction, for, as I say, at the moment the critics do not realise how extensively post-synchronisation has been practised.

Can there be, then, any valid æsthetic objection to the next step of controlled dubbing? If an actor has the appearance but not the voice, is it fundamentally wrong to give him a better voice for the home as well as for the export market?

A *better* voice—that is the operative part of the argument. Up till now, the dubbing of pictures has been comparatively indiscriminate. Synthetic personalities (one face with another voice) have not been planned with the care that is lavished on the grooming of real stars. It has not been a question of a better voice, but of another voice to get foreign release for the film.

I quite understand that there is considerable emotional resistance to an already established star appearing suddenly with a strange voice; but I do not believe a new synthetic star is doomed to failure. A carefully planned synthesis, a conscious creation of personality—that could be an æsthetic thrill; and from the planned synthesis might come fresh emergents of personality.

I agree that the synthetic star should be as much a unit for audiences of one language-speaking group as a real star: but this is not for sentimental reasons—it is for the sake of psychological conviction. To make an audience too aware of mechanics—as they would be if faces kept on changing voice within an audience group—would be to run the risk of interfering with the basic æsthetic rule for cinema that technique should vanish and the spectator be left with the experience.

But when it comes to the average critic's reaction to dubbing, I cannot help feeling that this is mostly hysterical. Surely one of the æsthetic pressures is to exploit the possibilities of a medium? And surely it is a wonderful thing that cinema offers the opportunity to create synthetic stars in a way no other medium does? I would say the æsthetic sin would be to neglect the opportunities of dubbing for the home market as well as for export—I would say that in cinema the synthetic star is probably the real one.

Yet there is another aspect of the dubbing question which needs consideration. Under the flutter of the æsthetic squabble, the sinister side is liable to pass unnoticed.

The practice of taking a film made in one country and giving it, in another country, a new sound-track, which has not been planned in collaboration with the original creators of the film, can be—a political temptation! There is an opportunity for interested parties to alter the weight of the dialogue. In many subtle ways, the whole message of a film can be changed. This is no wild exaggeration: I know for certain that this sort of thing has already been done in countries with pro-Fascist tendencies.

The danger can be eliminated if dubbing is taken seriously as a carefully planned part of film production, and is no longer a casual affair, a venal matter of box-office. The safeguard is the planned synthetic personality, created in collaboration with the originators of the film: it is also the way to give dubbing æsthetic justification.

THE IRISH SCREEN

By

JOHN GERRARD

THE GROWING NUMBER of British-produced films dealing with Irish subjects has rasped into activity Cinema aspirations which have lain dormant for many a year. *Captain Boycott*, *Odd Man Out*, *I See A Dark Stranger*, and *Hungry Hill* provided plots which were moulded into films of international appeal. It is poor consolation to our cultural conscience that use was made of Irish players and locations!

Our feelings will be appreciated by those of you in Britain who resented Hollywood's exploitation of *your* country in pre-war years—no matter how sympathetic the treatments. In fact, the general trend of Cinema history in Ireland has other points of similarity.

From 1900 onward pioneer units had been operating, but the outbreak of the Great War checked production here as in the rest of Europe, leaving the market open for America to capture. As Britain slowly fought her way into the foremost rank in quality, if not quantity, the better films were welcomed in Ireland because they were closer to our leisurely philosophy than the high-pressure products from Hollywood. But naturally they were not in complete harmony with our ideals and so the necessity for a national industry has become increasingly apparent.

Hindering a revival had come in turn the War of Independence, civil strife and the Economic War of the thirties. Even then all available capital was being channelled into the founding of more essential industries. The bulk of the population saw little reason for competing with established giants and was content to select entertainment from the copious supply of imported films. More discerning people soon realised the dangers of such lazy acquiescence.

Eloquent theorists arose in hundreds but did little more than argue furiously while waiting philosophically for a fairy god-mother grant from the Government. Expecting all sorts of protection they would scarcely admit that a quota system could not be established until a reasonable number of home products were being steadily released.

Moralists and nationalists added to the voices of protest at the gradual blanketing of native culture. Business-men drew attention to the comparatively large sums of money which were leaving the country. At last in 1937 the problem was discussed in Dail Eireann and an inter-departmental commission was formed to make an enquiry. In due course the report was forwarded but apparently became lost in some obscure file.

Yet public interest had been aroused and hopes were fostered. The events of 1939 put a decided check on any possible developments but the need was emphasised by a shortage of films caused by the Emergency Regulation which banned propaganda in favour of either the Axis or the Allied Powers.

A fantastic amount of excitement resulted when "Two Cities" was compelled by war-time difficulties to come on location to Enniskerry for the shooting of the Agincourt sequences in *Henry V*. Multitudes of sight-seers came

and the reams of matter in the Press must have exceeded the wildest dreams of the publicity manager! The event was important because it proved that Irish artists and craftsmen were capable of catering in a satisfactory manner for a most elaborate piece of film work. In addition it demonstrated how much a feature film might benefit not alone technicians and players but also an unexpected variety of trades.

A young Dublin enthusiast was able to persuade a business firm to sponsor the first issue of a film magazine on the lines of Pathe Pictorial under the title "Scathan na hEireann" (Mirror of Ireland). Only a few editions were released at irregular intervals, though I am informed that the project has not been abandoned.

Early in 1946 Hibernia Pictures Ltd. set up a small but neatly equipped laboratory and have been undertaking contracts for newsreel companies in Britain. Progressing slowly but methodically they are planning a regular magazine for distribution at home and abroad. A feature on Michael Davitt has been screened extensively in these islands and they hope to produce in the near future a number of historical and general interest "shorts".

This year also brought the first 35 mm. release of *Institiuid Naisiunta na Scannain Eire* (the National Film Institute of Ireland). The film was made to commemorate the centenary of Thomas Davis, the poet-patriot, and arrangements were made for its wide distribution in England. However, this organisation concentrates mainly on sub-standard productions of educational and cultural value.

Half way through 1947 came a tangle of rumours and contradictions which have been gradually straightened into three main facts.

Extensive studios with full modern equipment are being installed at Gormanston Castle in County Meath. The new company, Mercury Films, is to mount production on short documentaries before essaying more ambitious features.

A second group, Dublin Films, has already gone into action and Frank Dermody, late of the Abbey Theatre, has practically completed his direction of *My Hands are Clay*, dealing with the romance of a sculptor.

Of particular importance is the news from a reliable source that the Government has at last decided to provide a first-class film studio in which space will be hired out to native and visiting producers. Hitherto, companies have had the irksome necessity of voyaging to London to put the finishing touches to their work. The facilities will give a wonderful impetus to developments.

Now that events are on the march there seems no reason why Ireland should not make some noteworthy contributions to the world of Cinema. Indeed, it is only by earning patronage abroad that the industry could be an economic success as the home market will not provide adequate support. At least we can offer that which no outside producer could make—a genuinely Irish film expressing whatever genius we may happen to possess as a nation.

Our history alone provides a host of romantic subjects which require sympathetic understanding to get their full value. Insular sectarianism would have to be avoided, and, of course, a less materialistic and more religious atmosphere may be expected from a country so closely attached to Christian ideals. I venture to prophesy that most of the productions would be sent out in the same spirit as one of the pioneer features, *The Dawn*, a straight adventure story,

which carried the sub-title "Do cun Gloire De agus Onoire na hEireann" (To the Glory of God and the Honour of Ireland).

Creative artists we may claim to have in fair quantity, a strong theatre and a vital literature being established assets. There are authors of international renown who could be induced to adapt their talent to the technique of scenario-writing. With regard to the designing of sets there is need for neither apology nor explanation in quoting such names as Michael MacLiammoir, Carl Bonn and Michael Scott.

The real problem is the lack of experienced directors but already men like Robert Flaherty, John Forde and

Orson Welles have proved in American studios the capabilities of Irish minds when applied to such work. Flaherty was one of the first to fuse the art film and creative record when he produced *Nanook of the North* in 1923. Forde's gift for dramatic interpretation was particularly evident in *Grapes of Wrath* and *The Long Voyage Home*. Orson Welles put a wealth of ideas into his *Citizen Kane*.

Ireland has now a reputation for the making. Lavish productions will not be forthcoming, but the more optimistic among us hope that before long imaginative use of the camera may enable us to earn in Cinema at least an honoured niche!

THE CENSOR

Five Books reviewed by

JOHN M. SMITHELLS

At a period in history when the iron rod of bureaucracy and state control seems more heavily than ever to be beating our already bruised shoulders, it is a good thing to be reminded now and again of the dangers of censorship. There is a copious literature on censorship, which deserves wider publicity than it has so far received, especially in times like these when "bumbleness" is rampant.

Miss Ruth Inglis, who is responsible for the recent production of a Report on Self-regulation from the Commission on Freedom of the Press¹, has produced a readable, factual and what seems to be a completely impartial story of censorship in relation to films. The Motion Picture Production Code, with which she deals in detail, is the outcome of the film industry's attempt to avoid outside censorship. The story is not yet finished, but the struggles of the industry from the early days of the Nickelodeon to the huge financial film producing organisations of to-day are mirrored accurately in the ever changing regulations governing the production of films. The Commission on Freedom of the Press, which operates under a grant of funds from Time Inc. and Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. to the University of Chicago, has several recommendations to make. Among others, that the film should share the constitutional guarantee of the freedom of the press, that the government should use its powers to destroy monopolistic control of production and distribution, and that the public should insist on the highest standard of accomplishment by the cinema, so that it can play its full part in our social and economic life. It also recommends that the public should sponsor a national advisory board to review and propose changes from time to time in the Motion Picture and Advertising Codes.

An earlier book by Maurice Ernst and Alexander Lindey² is concerned with censorship in its wider aspects . . . books, radio and films. The stifling effect of broad censorship applied by narrow minds is the target at which they aim. One memorable example of the "official" mind is given. When Phil Strong prepared a radio version of his juvenile, *Honk the Moose*, one of the station officials objected to the periodic moose calls. "They're mating calls", he said, "They've got to come out. Too sexy".

Ernst and Lindey have adopted the same plan as did Dorothy Knowles³ in 1934. They attack censorship, not openly, but none the less effectively, by giving a carefully documented record from the early days of Anthony Comstock and the Vice Society, to the present day. They leave the reader to draw his own conclusions . . . and one may guess what those conclusions are.

A more recent book is a 219 page eulogy by Raymond Moley on the Hays Office⁴. That Will H. Hays was a remarkable man one has no doubt. That he saved the film industry from itself (and at its own request) one is convinced is also true, but one can perhaps hardly agree with the publishers' "blurb" that the author prepared his account "in a spirit of complete objectivity". It is, in brief, apparently a very biased history of the Hays Office.

Shortly after the outbreak of war John Eugene Harley, Professor of Political Science at the University of Southern California, and Chairman of the Committee on International Relations of the

American Institute of Cinematography, published a truly international book on the influence of the cinema. "World Wide Influence of the Cinema"⁵, which, more a work of reference than a descriptive story, is the result of three years' research. Professor Harley discusses the cinema as a vital force, censorship in the United States and other countries of the world, and devotes 100 pages to the varying national censorship regulations. Each country's rules are discussed and a list of banned and deleted films given. It makes intensely interesting and, at the same time, tragic reading. With the end of National Socialism as a power in Germany, the section on German censorship is of particular interest. For the purpose of studying conditions there, the author had conferences with Ernst Leichtenstern and Friedrich H. Walther, both of the Filmprüfstelle. The list of films banned because of "objections to members of the cast" were: *London by Night*, *Big City*, *Tell No Tales*, *Mannequin*, *Arsene Lupin Returns*, *Rose Marie* and many others. Professor Harley's book is probably the "driest" and yet most damning of all the books on film and censorship so far to come one's way.

Political censorship is a menace, and unluckily it is not difficult to enforce . . . for a time. Moral censorship is a menace and it is impossible to apply. For hundreds of years people have argued and wrangled as to what is obscene, vulgar and impure. We are no nearer the answer. "To the pure all things are pure". What might seem vulgar to one generation might not seem so to the next. "The thinking man must be allowed to think", John Stuart Mill once wrote, "No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise that, as a thinker, it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusion it may lead. Where there is a tacit convention that principles are not to be disputed we cannot hope to find that generally high scale of mental activity which has made some periods of history so memorable".

It may be too much to hope that before long every school-child in England shall be taught to read and properly to understand the meaning of Milton's *Areopagitica*, but it is our duty as adults, by reading and by conversation, to keep the idea of the freedom of the written and spoken word continually before us.

¹Freedom of the Movies: a Report on Self-Regulation from the Commission on Freedom of the Press, by Ruth A. Inglis. (University of Chicago Press; London, Cambridge University Press, 1947).

²The Censor Marches On: Recent Milestones in the Administration of the Obscenity Law in the United States, by Morris L. Ernst and Alexander Lindey. (New York, Doubleday, Doran, 1940).

³The Censor, the Drama and the Film, 1900-1934, by Dorothy Knowles. (London, Allen and Unwin, 1934).

⁴The Hays Office, by Raymond Moley. (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1945).

⁵World-Wide Influence of the Cinema: a Study of Official Censorship and the International Cultural Aspects of Motion Pictures, by John Eugene Harley. (Los Angeles, University of Southern California, 1940).

THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH FILM WRITING

By

A. L. VARGAS

THIS CINEMA of ours is a voracious animal. In these days of meagre rations this creature, at least, never goes short of good solid meals; the more novels, plays and stories we feed it the more vociferous grow its demands.

British films must maintain their output not only in quality but in quantity. This necessity to uphold the standard of excellence in British films was never more urgent than to-day. But if we examine the diet of this healthy and sturdy British creature, some interesting facts emerge. The majority of the output from British studios over the past months have been adaptations from novels. This trend in our films has certain disquieting features.

<i>Odd Man Out</i>	(F. L. Green)
<i>The Magic Bow</i>	(Manuel Komroff)
<i>Great Expectations</i>	(Charles Dickens)
<i>Nicholas Nickleby</i>	(Charles Dickens)
<i>Hungry Hill</i>	(Daphne Du Maurier)
<i>The Brothers</i>	(L. A. G. Strong)
<i>The Man Within</i>	(Graham Greene)
<i>Green For Danger</i>	(Christianna Brand)
<i>The Loves of Joanna Godden</i>	(Sheila Kaye Smith)
<i>Temptation Harbour</i>	(Georges Simenon)
<i>Black Narcissus</i>	(Rumer Godden)
<i>Jassy</i>	(Norah Lofts)
<i>Master of Bankdam</i>	(Thomas Armstrong)
<i>Captain Boycott</i>	(Phillip Rooney)
<i>A Man About the House</i>	(Francis Brett Young)

QUESTION

It is a fair question to ask how far this reliance of producers on successful novels and plays for the greater part of their output is holding back our film writers and stifling the emergence of a genuine school of writers of original stories for the screen. Are there any facts to show that novel adaptations make more successful films than those made from original stories written for the screen?

In Hollywood this same trend has been evident over a period of some years, and to judge by some of their recent efforts, it is not a policy calculated to reap further laurels for the American cinema.

The argument in favour of a novel adaptation is very clear. A published novel by an established author brings with it a certain prestige which carries a great deal of weight with film producers. Again, a novel has the advantage that as it is generally the result of labours over some months, the author has ample time in which to allow his brain child to grow and mature in his mind. As a result it is generally strong in characterisation. This fulness of characterisation is a great source of strength in a novel as potential film material, for well-delineated and contrasted characters are very important if a film is to have breadth and depth and rise above being merely another vehicle for well-known box office stars. The box office pull of a well-known novel is a very strong factor in the eyes of producers. Readers of the novel will rush to see how the film compares with the book; the more enlightened may go in fear and trembling, but you can be pretty sure they will go. In this manner producers can bank on a minimum guaranteed audience in advance and this eliminates some of the obvious risks of film-making.

Contrast this with the work of the script writer who may be asked to produce a love story, a murder story or a wise-cracking comedy in a matter of weeks, and who may confidently expect that when he presents his work at the story conference his original will be altered out of all recognition. In fact, he will be lucky if his original theme is retained.

Looking back over the past months at films which have been made from novels, we have the following:—

SHORT SIGHTED

From the above list one could cite *Odd Man Out* and *Great Expectations* as outstanding, not merely as film entertainment but as major contributions to the art of the cinema. *Black Narcissus* was a disappointment, redeemed only in parts by its acting and its photography. *The Loves of Joanna Godden*, *Captain Boycott* and *A Man About the House* deserve honourable mention and the remainder were more or less average entertainment comprising the staple diet of our cinema programmes.

Over the same period there were two play adaptations. *While the Sun Shines* was a frail thing on the screen and had little to commend it. *Frieda* had genuine touches of good cinema and was a most creditable attempt at the unenviable task of transferring a play to the screen without cramping the film's natural freedom of movement.

We are left with the following films in our list:—

A Matter of Life and Death.
The Overlanders.
School for Secrets.
Hue and Cry.
The Courtneys of Curzon Street.
Dear Murderer.
The Upturned Glass.
Take My Life.
Holiday Camp.
October Man.

A Matter of Life and Death started off well but pulled itself badly out of shape towards the end during the court scene, but it was a splendid experiment in fantasy on a grand scale and deserves high marks for boldness. *The Overlanders* broke fresh ground and was a genuine British Western which could show a few points to Hollywood, and its photography was superb. Of the rest, *Hue and Cry* had a newness of appeal about it which made this a happy, compact little film. *School for Secrets* was amusing and effective, but it lacked a certain coherence in scripting which tended to make it creak uneasily in parts. *The*

Courtneys of Curzon Street was another well-made but undistinguished vehicle for Anna Neagle. *Dear Murderer*, *Take My Life* and *The Upturned Glass* were all good thrillers. *October Man* was somewhat of a disappointment in spite of another magnificent performance by John Mills. *Holiday Camp*, on the other hand, was a brilliant piece of work. Here was British screen comedy at its best and all the more welcome for being rather rare these days. The success of this film must principally be due to a high level of team work in the acting, direction and scripting.

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions are to be drawn from the examination of the above films? Out of a total of 27 films made over the past months, 15 were novel adaptations, 2 were made from plays and 10 from original screen stories. The odds seem to be fairly heavy against the original screen story, and judging by the films now being made in the studios, the novel and play adaptation seem to be winning all along the line.

In my opinion it is a near-sighted policy for producers to rely so heavily on filming novels for the major part of their output. For this is a policy which, while possessing the many attractive features outlined above, brings with it certain dangers. First of these is the desire to squeeze into the film as many of the novel's important incidents as possible. This often leads to a script so heavily burdened with incidents that the film becomes a severe strain to over-worked eyes, ears and brain to absorb and make sense of what is happening. As a result the natural rhythm of a film is lost; there are no pauses for the mind to readjust itself between climaxes and the stunned and bewildered filmgoer merely longs for the wretched thing to stop—hardly what those responsible for the film intended.

But even in the best of films made from novels one detects at times a certain over-reliance of the producers to let the novel do all the work for them. Chances of genuine cinematic treatment are tossed aside in the anxiety to cram in all the big moments of the novel. In the long run, however, it is in the interests of the cinema itself that it should seek after original subjects and not rely on second-hand material if it is to progress and not merely to decline into an efficient machine for translating novels and plays into the language of the cinema.

At this point, no doubt, producers will declare that they are only too willing to consider original stories for the screen; stories written with a full knowledge of the cinema's ample bag of technical tricks, and a genuine feeling for the medium, but, if the stories are not forthcoming, the film makers say, they have to keep on making films or go out of business. Hence the present popularity of the novel for filming.

AND ANOTHER QUESTION

Why has the writer for the screen been working at a disadvantage from the beginning of film-making?

Clearly because the cinema, starting off as a crazy fairground novelty, was not taken seriously by writers. As

a result, they were relegated to second place in the business of film-making and they have played second fiddle ever since. Studio writers, experienced in film technique, were seldom allowed full use of their creative powers and were utilized chiefly as hacks to work out new angles or twists on well-worn themes or to concoct some new vehicle for the star under contract to the studio. Outside writers, less restricted through working away from the studio, were usually at a disadvantage because they lacked the necessary technical experience.

The only solution to the problem of greater freedom and recognition for screenwriters appears to be that they should gain the necessary experience in a studio and then leave it to sit down and write complete film scripts down to the last detail, as a dramatist writes his play down to the last detail of the stage directions.

If screenwriters were to do this and insist on their screenplay being shot as written (admittedly it might take years!) the time would come when a screenwriter would hand his screenplay to a director in a similar manner to that in which a playwright hands his play to a producer. The screenwriter would then take a seat and watch the director make his film for him, just as a playwright would watch a producer at the first rehearsal of his play. On such occasions the playwright will be quickly on his feet to remonstrate with the producer if the latter appears to be altering or pulling his original conception out of shape. But having satisfied himself that the man knows his job, he will leave him in peace to get on with the business.

FINALE

To my mind the problem is essentially one of director *versus* writer. Up till now the director has had the whip hand. It is he who is ultimately responsible for the shape and texture of the film. His skill at the job of film-making overrides that of the screenwriter and the finished film invariably bears the stamp of his individual talent rather than that of the screenwriter. But surely in the case of an original screenplay for a film it is the screenwriter that supplies the creative talent while the director is merely an executant in charge of a group of skilled technicians? One can imagine what the reaction of the public would be if a famous concert pianist took it into his head to improve upon the Beethoven Emperor piano concerto by interpolating passages of his own and cutting out parts of the original score. Yet this is precisely what often occurs with a screenwriter's work before it reaches the screen, but no one is heard to complain, least of all the screenwriter who is paid only too well to work violence on his artistic ideals.

The screenwriters' weak position in film-making has cost them and the cinema a great deal. They have barely managed to set one timid foot inside the film studio and the sooner they wake up to the fact the better.

Will such a state of affairs ever come to pass that the screenwriter has as much authority in the making of a film as the playwright has in the theatre? Only the future can tell. The remedy for the unhappy position of screenwriters to-day lies in their own hands. On their reaction to this problem depends to a great extent the survival and progress of a creative cinema.

STROHEIM—

HIS WORK

AND INFLUENCE

By

PETER NOBLE

IN PARIS, Erich von Stroheim, at the age of sixty-two, is commencing a great new career as the star of post-war French films. To the modern cinemagoer he is best known, perhaps, for his superb playing of Teutonic villains in such war-time Hollywood productions as *North Star* and *Five Graves to Cairo*. By the minority film audience, who regularly see Continental productions, he is regarded as one of the most dominating personalities in the French cinema, the star of *La Grande Illusion*, *Gibraltar*, *L'Alibi*, *Les Disparus de St. Agil* and others. To cinema historians, however, Stroheim is known as one of the greatest directors of all time. Only a Colossus could span such a career—thirty years ago a great director of silent films, to-day a great bi-lingual actor with a fine flair for cinema and with his quality of genius undimmed by either time or a virtual Hollywood boycott.

As a penniless immigrant, ex-Austrian Army officer Stroheim entered the American film industry as an "extra" after working in the U.S.A. as a flypaper salesman, a tourists' guide, a life-saver, a singer in a beer-garden, a playwright, a translator, and a vaudeville actor. Apprenticed to the great D. W. Griffith on *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*, the young Austrian learned much, and after making something of a reputation as an actor during the First World War, playing swaggering Huns in Hollywood propaganda movies, he bluffed Carl Laemmle into allowing him to write, star in and direct his first film, *Blind Husbands*.

BOYCOTT

Of the films he made in the silent days, at least one is a masterpiece, while the others will for always rank among the outstanding American motion pictures in the history of the screen. The ex-actor wrote, designed and directed such silent epics as *Foolish Wives*, *Greed*, *Merry-Go-Round*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Wedding March* and *Queen Kelly*. Each bore the stamp of his remarkable personality, each production was surrounded by a wild aura of extravagance and temperament, and the actor who had made a reputation with filmgoers as *The Man You Love to Hate*, soon became the object of hate and scorn of those film financiers who had entrusted him with their money. Finally, Hollywood, who had called him "the greatest director in the world", destroyed him when sound films came and Stroheim was boycotted, in spite of the fact that he had made some of the finest of all American movies. Since no company would allow him to direct, Von turned to acting.



As an actor he has had varied success during the past fifteen years. His most notable Hollywood work occurred in *The Great Gabbo*, *Friends and Lovers*, and in that interesting adaptation of Pirandello's *As You Desire Me* opposite Garbo. By the middle 1930's, however, Stroheim's boat had once more drifted into dark waters, and the great actor-writer-director was eventually forced to accept a job as a humble scenarist with M.G.M., the studio for whom ten years previously he had made his masterpiece, *Greed*, and the outstanding *The Merry Widow*.

NOT WANTED

France saved him from oblivion when Jean Renoir sent for him to play the maimed prison-camp commandant in *La Grande Illusion*. Stroheim packed his bags with alacrity, shook the dust of Hollywood from his feet, and for his work in *La Grande Illusion* subsequently received the French Legion of Honour. Until the outbreak of the Second World War he was one of the busiest and most popular actors in French films, but when the Nazis marched into Paris, the Austro-American, high up on the Gestapo "Black List", was forced to flee to the U.S.A.

But Hollywood did not want him back. Stroheim was remembered only for his reputed extravagance and ex-



La Danse de Mort

Von Stroheim and Denise Vernac

Rome Studios 1947

cesses during the silent days; his undoubted genius as an actor and writer were overlooked. Finally, Paramount, after testing dozens of actors, decided that Von was the obvious choice to masquerade as Field Marshal Rommel in the film *Five Graves to Cairo*, and he returned to California. At the studio he was interviewed by a magazine reporter.

"How do you feel about your come-back"? enquired the earnest scribe.

"I do not need to come back; it is just the movies who have come back"! was Stroheim's rejoinder, a remark typical of the man whose fearlessness, arrogance and almost frightening integrity have made him one of Hollywood's major scapegoats.

My friend, Ernest Betts, once made the point that what we can learn from Stroheim to-day is what to *avoid* in the making of films, but Stroheim can teach us a great deal more than this. In an age when the production of motion pictures has become a vast industry on a scale never envisaged by Thomas Edison, William Friese-Green, the Lumières, Robert Paul and the other pioneers, it is well to remember that Stroheim's films were *personal* films, in the best sense of the word.

At a time when Hollywood applies to film-making the technique of the factory, and when each new, glittering

"super-comedy" or "super-drama" rolls off the Hollywood conveyor-belt like the latest Ford model, we can do worse than study the life and work of a man who always believed implicitly that his films should not be standardised but should bear the stamp of his own personality, even challenging the box office by their revolutionary quality. It is significant that *Greed*, acknowledged by critics and historians as one of the landmarks of the cinema, was one of the greatest box office failures of all time.

The history of the cinema has indicated that the truly great and lasting films have been the work of artists who have understood that a movie, like any other work of art, must have "style". Thus the strength of a film by Carol Reed, John Ford, Michael Powell, David Lean, Robert Siodmak, Jean Renoir, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Julien Duvivier, Preston Sturges and Marcel Carné lies in the fact that their work contains dominant personal characteristics. A Lang film, for example, is unmistakable, and similarly recognisable are the works of Clair, Reed, Sturges, Welles—and Stroheim.

FINANCE NO OBJECT

Literally hundreds of directors have succeeded in making "box office" productions; and in a world where successful business is all-important these directors undoubtedly do



The Wedding March (1927)

the job for which they are paid. Nevertheless, in ten years they will all be forgotten. Not so Stroheim. Oblivion is not for such as Von!

Personally I would rather plump for the "experimentalists" like Powell and Pressburger, the Boulting Brothers, Orson Welles, Carné, Stroheim, Renoir. Each of these artists makes a film in his own way without being unduly influenced by the financial returns; and the story of motion picture development reveals clearly that the highlights in the progress of the cinema have invariably been provided by those individualists who have struggled against the machine, the handful who have had the courage to back their own convictions against the admonishments of the money-men.

And, because it is due to these artists that the cinema has made any advancement at all from the days of the Nickelodeon, a study of Stroheim's work is both necessary and timely. As writer, director, designer and actor, he has greatly enriched the cinema. But his significance does not stop there. Although he has not directed a picture for many years, his influence, as Lewis Jacobs has so admirably pointed out in his detailed study of Stroheim's work in "The Rise of the American Film", has been enormous, particularly on the American school of directors; and not only as a director. Stroheim also brought dignity to the craft of screen-writing at a time when directors were apt to shoot "off the cuff", aided by hack script-writers ready on the set every minute to provide ideas by which available scenery or props might be used economically. In addition, he made the film financiers realise the true importance of the director at a period when Hollywood was in the fevered

grip of the star system at its worst (when, it will be remembered, any blonde chorus-girl with "sex-appeal" or any flashing-eyed ex-waiter could plunge the film city into confusion). It was then that the rebel Stroheim succeeded in putting the director in his rightful position in film production, a position which every historian has since acknowledged to be inevitable if the movies were to advance from being the opium of the illiterate. If one acknowledges that the film is truly the director's medium, then one must remember that Stroheim was the prime mover in the struggle for recognition of the director's importance in opposition to the temperamental delaying tactics of the silent stars.

Stroheim would be important merely because of his pioneer work in the development of screen literature, but is doubly important as one of the men who laid the foundations for the modern cinema, as one of the greatest directors of all time. He has made half-a-dozen films which will always have places of honour in the history of motion pictures, and has lent his talents to the cinema as a considerable screen actor for more than thirty years.

Hollywood may boycott him, but Stroheim still goes on treading the fabulous and eventful path which has led from *The Birth of a Nation*, through the early struggles of the silent films, and out of the turbulent 'thirties to his present success in France; his stormy career spans three generations of filmgoers. His work will still stand a hundred years from now when the flickering images of *Greed*, *Foolish Wives*, *The Wedding March* and others, will be shown constantly to every student of the cinema. At a time when his contemporaries from the silent days are dead or long since retired,

Erich von Stroheim is still active. In Rome he recently adapted Strindberg's *The Dance of Death* for the screen, and himself acted the part of the tragic Edgar, a performance which has placed him back on the peak of popularity in France which was his after *La Grande Illusion* ten years ago.

At sixty-two, Stroheim has found a rebirth of reputation in Paris, but in Hollywood he is still talked of with bated breath. He is a legend, the director who defied the financiers, who would shoot thousands of feet of film in order to have just one scene completely right, who refused to have his producers on the set while he was working, and who could make or break screen actors. None of the players in Stroheim films ever succeeded in equalling their brilliance under other directors, for it was acknowledged that he had the magic touch.

When Eisenstein visited the U.S.A. he exclaimed, "I want to meet the three greatest men in the American cinema: Chaplin, Disney and Stroheim". Von still remains great. His performance in *The Dance of Death* recalls his

genius in *Hearts of the World*, *Foolish Wives*, *The Wedding March*, *As You Desire Me* and *La Grande Illusion*. We may not have Stroheim-directed films, but at least we still have the privilege and pleasure of seeing his acting.

One of his French films, *Macao, L'Enfer du Jeu*, was recently "dubbed" with English dialogue and released in Britain as *Gambling Hell*, while *Les Disparus de St. Agil*, which he made in 1939, was also re-issued here in 1947. His Hollywood pictures, period 1945-46, are still occasionally on view in Britain (*the Lady and the Master*, *The Great Flamarion*, *The Mask of Dijon*, etc.); and his first and only British film, *Mademoiselle Docteur*, has been re-released this year. Soon we may be seeing his newest French films, *Illusions* and *The Dance of Death*. It is said that he will write and direct his next French film; as to that we shall have to wait and see.

But, in the words of critic Oswald Blakeston, "As for Stroheim the actor, we can rejoice that we still have the torchlight of his personality, for whenever Stroheim is on the screen—we watch"!

LOW AND HIGH LUSTRE

By

JOHN H. WINGE

RECENTLY I SAW A picture called *So Well Remembered*. It was British-made with the exception of producer, director and screen writer—the much-honoured makers of *Crossfire*, Adrian Scott, Edward Dmytryk and John Paxton.

However, succumbing to that certain hypnotic effect of the main title I had originally the hazy feeling of being confronted with an American product: RKO, Scott, Dmytryk, novelist James Hilton (distinguished citizen of Hollywood), Paxton and the "Karl Marx of Communism in the field of music" as composer Hans Eisler was so aptly defined by the Un-American Activities Committee.

This sleepiness induced by anticipation vanished quickly, though, when the first shots of a small English industrial town flashed on the screen. What was that? No model shot? No process shot? Blacked chimneys puffed real smoke and the cobbled streets looked carelessly damp under an unpainted gray sky. Was this going to be a newsreel? Or a documentary? Quickly I tried to figure out where I could spend the rest of the evening. But before I had made up my mind there I was happily back home again when young Mr. Chips, or however he was called, cycled down a studio-built road with all the traditional trimmings and lightings of it.

From here on an additional couple of outdoor shots didn't bother me any more—we were back to that cozy washed-out gray so lovingly cultivated by the contemporary masters of cinematography. The story of our Mr. Hilton I

liked too—what a wicked woman was read here by Martha Scott and how touching was the life-long patience of that Mr. Chips as performed by John Mills. All his life Chips kept fighting for the removal of the local slums with his fine sermons, editorials and pleas to the members of the Conservative Party.

How far these people are like "life" I wouldn't know and I do not care, either. Wicked women have to be punished—that's understood. And as Mr. Chips grows old while stubbornly pursuing an obviously hopeless case and using obviously hopeless methods he is rightly to be considered the nice kind of starry-eyed idealist. They are all right. And if the slum doctor solves his daily problems by washing them down with hard liquor that's quite okay, too. It is a time-honoured way of life.

What had me slightly puzzled was the question if that dozen of English outdoor shots represented an invasion of British realism into Hollywood's serenity or an American concession to a custom of impoverished Europe.

Somewhat tired by the tireless exertions of this Mr. Chips I felt consoled by the fact that since the days of Maurice Stiller's pictures of rural Sweden and Alexander Dovzhenko's *Earth Nature* has been retired from the screen more or less. This we have borne with ease because of the lovely collection of ketchup-tinted sunsets assembled by the travelling Mr. FitzPatrick.

There has been a certain danger lurking around the making of moving pictures all the time: the danger of going out and photographing people and things and streets and woods and automobile accidents. In its infant days an unenlightened audience used to applaud attempts along this line but meanwhile the æsthetic influence of Hollywood fortunately has made itself felt all over the world. "Life" has been banned within the limits of newsreels but even there we can rest assured that expert editing has made it look as attractive as it ought to be.

What may happen if some reckless characters try to use the camera to photograph doings without much aid from set designers, actors, heavy lighting equipment and make-up men was uncomfortably hinted at in Mr. de Rochemont's semi-factual attempts like *House in 52nd Street* or *Boomerang* or worse in many of the street scenes of Rossellini's *Open City*. Why, they looked like right out of a newsreel before having been edited properly—with focus blurred and the Nazi soldiers marching somehow off picture centre and no well-engineered lighting effects—it was like scenes "just caught by accident". And the story too—brutal and unpleasant.

GLOSS OVER WRINKLES

Being one of many tired business men I go to a movie to see handsome people in handsome surroundings doing handsome stories. I want to see every little scroll on the wall of the home of sales clerk Clark Gable just as clearly as the fire in the pupils of Dorothy Lamour. Being shocked by the petty thievery of my own bookkeeper I want to relax with a pleasant story of sweet people and if one of them is a meanie—well, I can trust to find him or her being punished severely before the mighty fanfares of the end title will sound. I do not care to see anything like "life" on the screen but the fulfilment of my wishes as it ought to be: I myself want to look like Tyrone Power and my wife like Jane Russell and my girl-friend like Judy Garland, my business partner like Gregory Peck and my bookkeeper as honest as Van Johnson and my relatives like Gene Kelly (rich uncle) and Rita Hayworth (mother-in-law). I like to see myself (Tyrone) live in enormous palace-like mansions with loyal servants galore instead of in a one-room flat and in eternal fear of the landlord. I, too, want to run into streaks of good luck all the time. I, too, want to be rosy-cheeked and even-toothed and tall, dark and handsome. I, too, want to have a witty quip handy any time and be a fast conversationalist with the proper pronunciation of difficult words.

I am grateful that Hollywood has taught the world to gloss over its ugly wrinkles. No rain will leak into its sets except carefully measured drops, no speck will soil the clothes of its stars except planted ones, no mishap will occur that does not carry the nucleus of its happy ending in itself. That's why I like the model shots of toy trains swaying in their tiny tracks, of little boats meeting typhoons in table basins, of rugged mountains or quaint castles painted on backdrops. It all means control to me—control of the elements, control of the unforeseen, control of my fears. To the studio the model shot might mean a saving—to me it means emotional security.

MIRACLES TO ORDER

Lately, Hollywood has been turning out a series of miracle pictures thus paying late homage to Georges

Méliès and his trick pictures of more than 40 years ago. However, the tricks of the present productions are properly done up in mellifluous religion. While the heavy majority of them deal with miracles performed within the bounds of catholic regulations a few newcomers go in for the generality of an activated Santa Claus or for benevolent angels in conservative business suits and neckties suggesting arrived protestantism or low necklines as of Terpsichore's costumes indicating the pagan belief of classic Greece.

In an age of the uncertainty of wars and the certainty of atomic and bacterial arms I was comforted by watching Cary Grant casted as an Episcopalian angel raise his index finger slowly and in this magic way raise also the contents of a bottle of port thusly supplying Monty Woolley with an eternal source of joy. This fine point was made in a production by some of the makers of *Best Years of Our Lives*. Human warmth and the promise of a better life were also radiated by the Kris Kringle of Mr. Gwenn when he—as the payoff of a picture—procured a cute and apparently inexpensive little house for the couple in love. If these and the even richer performances of the catholic kind will not make for better and bigger churchgoing—it will be a miracle, too.

Also the makers and re-makers of *Forever Amber* have achieved high lustre. Had they followed the textbook by Miss Winsor I would have been forced to hire a baby sitter for the evening. This way I could take my whole family with me to the cinema and even my usually ill-behaved children were of no bother put to sleep early after the main title.

FILMS TO AVOID

This heart-warming shine is all missing from the latest production of that disreputable Charles Chaplin. Carrying on like some kind of a continental he regretlessly kills fine upright ladies. He used to be a lot funnier when he shuffled around in his rags as a dumb sort of a tramp. As a matter of fact, I have never cared much for him, anyhow. No effulgence, no beauty. The sets were poor, the stories ridiculous. And he never got the girl in the end. Depressing and not uplifting, sir.

More and more all that is looking to me like some sort of foreign and not unsubversive influence. These pictures are all ill-mannered. Like a drunk they seem to delight in unpolished behaviour, in uncouth talk, in careless and faulty clothing. Why, in de Sicca's *Shoe Shine* we are confronted with the shady dealings of street urchins of the lowest kind. While the juvenile delinquents of Hollywood pictures even at their worst will always manage to look well-fed and well-groomed the little vagabonds of the Italian picture somehow look always really filthy. Besides, they do not act like children I know. They behave like small adults. And not once do they display any interest in baseball or in icecream. Is it a wonder that the American moviegoers stay away from this sort of picture? They are as shrill as modern music. And this reminds me of that sweet Bostonian lady who remarked after having heard the performance of a symphony by a modern European composer, "Conditions must be terrible over there".

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC—ANOTHER VIEW

By

HANS KELLER

TO PUT FRANK THINGS FIRST, this article is an uncompromising polemic against the upshot of Anthony Thomas' article on "Hollywood Music" in the last issue of this journal. Mr. Thomas seems to hold that the merits of Hollywood music have been underrated, indeed neglected in this country, and that the art of the film owes a great deal to a number of Hollywood's pioneer musicians. I vehemently contest this thesis, having, on the contrary, come to the conclusion that while the toxic effect of the more discreditable Hollywood music cannot be overestimated, the aesthetic value of the more competent Hollywood music can hardly be underestimated. "Hollywood music"—is this not an unwarrantable generalisation? Admittedly generalisations about what different people produce are unjustified when each man produces according to his individual character. But they are justified when all produce in response to a common external demand. This, exactly, is the case in Hollywood.

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC IN GENERAL

As I am preparing this article, Aaron Copland's (*Of Mice and Men*) chapter on "Music in the Films" from his book *Our New Music* reaches me by way of the *Musical Digest*¹. Since Mr. Copland is (a) a distinguished American composer with first-hand Hollywood experience, (b) a propagandist for American music, and (c) has a distinct tendency towards balanced judgments in matters aesthetic, I am delighted to quote him in support of what some might consider my extreme view: "... the typical Hollywood composer is concerned not with the reaction of the public, as you might think, but with that of the producer. It isn't surprising, therefore, that all film music originating in Hollywood tends to be very much the same. The score of one picture adds up to about the score of any other. You seldom hear anything fresh or distinctive partly because everyone is so intent upon playing safe. A pleased producer means more jobs. That alone is sufficient to explain the Hollywood stereotype of music". Mr. Thomas maintains that "there can be no comparison between the respective merits and shortcomings of the American film music and the British, that is, there should be none". I suggest there should be plenty. While there is no reason for admiring British film music in its entirety, does not this question of stereotyped music alone offer a valuable basis for a comparison between respective merits and shortcomings? Can the best, or even the second-best, film composers in this country be said to write stereotyped music, whatever defects their work may otherwise have? "Stop!", you may say, "it is not fair to compare the Hollywood composer with great or near-great composers who, in this country and on the Continent, have been writing for the films. Your *tertium comparationis* is lacking: Hollywood simply doesn't as a rule engage composers who have distinguished themselves in the field of music *per se*". This, however, is precisely my point. American composers of Aaron Copland's

calibre dislike submitting to demands for stereotyped music and thus refrain from becoming regular film composers. In Hollywood musical art is virtually taboo, whereas in our own filmland it has at least its minority rights respected. So, while suggesting, like Mr. Thomas, that the music of the West Coast has considerable historical significance, Copland considers it "artistically of a low order." "The best one can say about Hollywood is that it is a place where composers are actually needed". Our joy at such a need must, I suggest, depend upon its quality, about which Mr. Copland does not leave us in any doubt. Speaking of Ernest Toch's score for *Peter Ibbetson*, he says that "on the strength of this job, Toch should be to-day one of the best-known film composers. But unfortunately there aren't enough people in Hollywood who can tell a good score when they hear one. To-day Toch is generally assigned to do 'screwy music'. (In Hollywood music is either 'screwy' or 'down to earth'—and most of it is down to earth.)" Accordingly, "most (Hollywood) scores, as everybody knows, are written in the late-nineteenth-century symphonic style, a style now so generally accepted as to be considered inevitable".

So much for Hollywood music in general. Let us now go into some of it in particular, as far as there is any.

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC IN PARTICULAR

There is one Hollywood film score which Mr. Thomas actually describes as *beautiful*. Italics dumbfoundedly mine. In point of fact I do not know a single Hollywood score which deserves this epithet. But I readily concede that the music which Mr. Thomas thinks full of beauty, namely, Miklos Rozsa's score to *Spellbound* is among the best-contrived American film music that has reached us. It seems to me that Mr. Thomas takes its undoubted skill for beauty; its more strongly emotional paragraphs are, in fact, ugly. Now in order to avoid the suspicion that upon reading Mr. Thomas' article I might be giving way to too many second thoughts (especially in regard to so complex a conception as that of beauty), I may perhaps be allowed to quote in this article one or two of my previous criticisms. On the *Spellbound* music: "As far as its dramatic—more exactly, thrilling—aspect goes, it is just what is needed. But the lyrical side spoils everything, not because it is lyrical, but because it isn't, really. To write lyrical film music that is not Kitsch is far more difficult than to write dramatic film music that is not boring. The Kitschy aspect of the *Spellbound* music is represented by its Leitmotiv. . . ."² Rozsa used to compose for British films, but it seems that he has acclimatized his music without difficulty to Hollywood's requirements. Indeed it was probably his capacity for adapting both himself and other people's music that

¹ I/4, 10ff.

² "Film Music: Some Objections," this journal, XV/60, Winter, 1946-47.

brought him his commissions to write "native" stuff (cf. *Jungle Book*, made under Korda in Hollywood, or *Sundown*) and to contribute to the category of the would-be Serious Musical: See *Song to Remember*, *Scheherazade*, in which he adapted (very much so) and directed (less so) Rimsky-Korsakov's music, and *Time out of Mind*, which I have depreciated elsewhere³. His scores (cf. also *Lady on a Train*) show, in varying degrees, the merits and demerits of the *Spellbound* music. Of his latest score, that to *The Macomber Affair*, I once wrote that "one appreciates this renowned film composer's tendency towards economy of thematic material when his themes are suitable therefor. Here they are not".

This Hollywood habit of constantly reintroducing, by way of the Leitmotiv technique, thematic (rather than melodic) material that does not bear such frequent repetition or variation brings us to another of the main objects of Mr. Thomas' appreciation, i.e., the music of Max Steiner, whose score to *Cloak and Dagger*, quantitatively over-generous, is a typical Hollywood product. In the main, the music⁴ centres on a one-bar *ostinato* and a four-bar phrase (consisting of a repeated two-bar motif) which in itself assumes *ostinato* significance. Apart from contributing to the establishment of the sinister atmosphere (espionage), and apart from their Leitmotivic function, the two figures are not of any particular significance, or let us say, their significance is latent. They are not of course the product of creation, but rather of selection. One is an E minor scale excerpt, the other consists of the E minor triad—two elementary thematic ingredients which remain to be built up into something. They remain so forever. The whole point of a basso *ostinato* is that something should happen to it upstairs. But Steiner's upper structure is atrophied; you can hardly call a repetitive superimposing of Ex. 2 upon Ex. 1 an event. The only modifications of Exs. 1 and 2 which I remember are (a) a diminution of Ex. 1, and (b) two changes of mode, in the middle and at the end of the film. For the rest, Exs. 1 and 2 are repeated, however lush their dress-up, *ad ridiculum*, thereby confirming the first part of my maxim that (speaking of music only) Hollywood tragedy makes you laugh, while Hollywood humour makes you cry.

There is another (love-)Leitmotiv in the score, a rather weak violin solo. The screen story seems to me to ask for a respectable love theme developing upon the *ostinato*. But such a structure, would, I suppose, have been too obtrusive.

Copland says that a "secret of movie music that Steiner has exploited is the writing of atmosphere music almost without melodic content of any kind". One certainly agrees about the absence of melodic content. But now: "A melody is by its nature distracting, since it calls attention to itself. For certain kinds of neutral music, a kind of melodyless music is needed. Steiner does not supply mere chords but superimposes a certain amount of melodic motion, just enough to make the music sound normal and yet not enough to compel attention". This may be all very well in theory, but unfortunately a good deal of Steiner's music doesn't sound normal and therefore compels one's angry attention.

I have not seen *Four Wives*, but I heard a broadcast of the records mentioned by Mr. Thomas. There was again the sentimental love-violin-solo, again a descending 4-note

ostinato in E minor, and it was all again the typical Hollywood stuff: Luxury without, poverty within.

In *Gone With the Wind*, which also receives Mr. Thomas' mention, Steiner drenches the sound track in a rather indiscriminate fashion; in places the music has somewhat less relation to the visual than the band's music at Lyon's Corner House has to your table talk. Formally the score is a mess, while emotionally it is meretricious; the scoring, too, is cheap. The shabby title tune which does not bear a single hearing recurs—none of your melodyless neutrality here—twenty-one times, the last version being a heavenly F major chorus.

The best score of Steiner's I know is, at any rate in parts, his latest, to *Love and Learn*. The constantly repeated, humorous Leitmotiv is relatively well chosen and utilized. You get a glimpse here of what Steiner could do if he availed himself of his talent.

There is more than one aspect to Hollywood's tendency towards redundant repetition. Examine, for instance, some of the work of Franz Waxman, another of Mr. Thomas' heroes. This composer recently gave us two scores, both on about the same level: *Nora Prentiss* and *The Two Mrs. Carrolls*. Of the latter, I wrote: "To Franz Waxman . . . has fallen the thankless task of musicalizing the atmosphere of *The Two Mrs. Carrolls*. But although one could not have told him what to do with this film, one might have told him what to avoid, namely, the musical equivalent of 'Suspense! Sensation!!' One does not so much object to his repeating himself (which he does not excessively), as to his repeating the film. As a matter of fact there would be more than enough atmosphere in this picture without any music at all⁵. Which goes for quite a number of Hollywood movies, greedy of music though they, of all films, are.

Alfred Newman is the last in Mr. Thomas' list whom I have space to mention. He recently directed, musically, two films which totally lacked musical merit: *Moss Rose* (with a score by David Buttolph, who demolished what there was to demolish in *Tobacco Road*), and that truly paralysing piece of work, *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now*. May I refer those who can tell a rotten tune when they see one to the quotation of this film's theme song I am giving elsewhere.⁶ Mr. Newman, it is true, did not compose this music, but he did undertake the musical direction.

I submit that Mr. Thomas' benevolence, much as it may prepossess us in his favour by its divergence from common highbrow snobbery, is displaced. I do not deny that among the mass of Hollywood scores that are beyond hope there are a few which make a useful contribution to the visual. But there will have to be some drastic changes even in the gifted Hollywood composer's environment before he can be expected to contribute beauty to, or to the beauty of, the film.

³ "Film Music: 'Time out of Mind'," *Contemporary Cinema*, I/8, September, 1947.

⁴ Here as often elsewhere in this article, I am relying on memory which has to stretch over a considerable period. I must be forgiven for not specially collecting material for our present purpose: Before I saw Mr. Thomas' article on Hollywood music I had no intention of writing one myself.

⁵ "Film-musical Atmosphere," *Contemporary Cinema*, I/9 October, 1947.

⁶ "Film Music: Theme Song and Leading Motif," *Film Monthly Review*, January, 1948.

SOCIAL REALISM IN FILM AND RADIO

A Comparative Analysis

By

NORMAN SWALLOW

THE MERIT OF BRITISH FILMS during the war was their nearness to real life as lived by real people. The best of them were not "story" films at all—at least they were not "story" films in the glamorous, Hollywood sense of the term: they were documentaries. Grierson's definition of the documentary film as "the creative interpretation of reality" applied far more to our war-time feature films than to the early, non-fiction work of Grierson himself. Those pioneers of twenty years ago were justly proud of the discovery that there is more drama in the ordinary lives of ordinary folk than could be manufactured by half a dozen highly paid script-writers. Their discovery gave Britain pre-eminence in the field of the documentary film; but the films they made were lacking in one important respect—human feelings. They were so eager to present the truth, so eager to avoid the pitfall of using professional actors, that the characters in their films were never quite real enough. They were genuine miners, or Post Office workers, or sailors, or steel workers; they looked real, and their appearance was genuine. But we were never allowed to see them in any situation that was not directly concerned with their work. They were not allowed to express themselves fully; their political convictions, their family problems, their hobbies, their love affairs—all these were outside the scope of the pre-war documentary film. In a phrase, the approach was intellectual instead of emotional. Consequently, although each film had moments of considerable beauty it very rarely left a completely satisfying impression. Documentary producers seemed to be contented with the mere fact of presenting actual people on the screen.

The war, which was very much an affair of human beings, killed this attitude. The intellectual approach just wasn't enough; what was needed was a true marriage of the standard documentary and the well-knit, technically skilled story film. The marriage took place and the revolution was deep enough to give British feature films a new prestige. The important thing to note is that films like *The Way Ahead*, *The Way to the Stars* and *Millions Like Us* are true documentary films. I would even claim that *The Way to the Stars* (fiction, acted by professionals) is truer and finer than *Target for Tonight*. For the creative interpretation of reality implies that all the characters shall be four-square human beings, with problems outside their public occupation.

The revolution has been accepted by the documentary film-makers. The recruitment by the story-film of such documentary craftsmen as Harry Watt and Cavalcanti has helped to produce the necessary authentic background. The true future of British films lay, one would have thought, along this path. I use the phrase "would have thought", because within the last year or so all the lessons of war-time film making seem to have been forgotten. We are once more offered the old list of colourful escapism: *An Ideal Husband*,

Uncle Silas, *Jassy* and *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. The social scene can only be used as a background for melodramatic pieces about the Spiv—*They Made Me a Fugitive* and *It Always Rains on Sundays*. At a time when the nation seems to require social understanding above all things, its film industry has gone back to 1938. A fine opportunity is being missed.

Perhaps I am begging the question when I say that we need social understanding. I will be told by the film makers that the public expects something other than a reminder of our national peril whenever it goes to the pictures. That argument, one would have thought, was even more true of the war years. The fact is that our present crisis is as human as it is economic; society is divided, and each section lives in ignorance of the problems of the rest. There is much talk about Coal but precious little understanding of the problems of the miner; much discussion about the future of steel, but little knowledge of the conditions of work in that particular industry. There is much argument about a decline in moral values and the need for a "Dunkirk spirit", but little attempt to foster the mutual understanding between various strata of society without which that spirit can never be re-created. Under such conditions, I think, the call to the documentary film-makers should be unanswerable; and I use the term "documentary" in the broadest sense. We don't want intellectual efforts alone; we want to see human beings behaving in a human way. *Millions Like Us* is the sort of film we need.

The arguments I have used about the film are true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the radio. Assuming that it is wise at the present time for us to present the people to the people, to present each section of society to the other sections, to present the complex problems of post-war life in human terms—assuming all this, it is clear that the film and the radio offer its most powerful media of expression. Human beings and human problems can live more vividly in these media than on the printed page or in the theatre. There is an artificiality about the theatre which nearly suffocates an Ibsen or a Shaw, and which smothers a lesser genius entirely.

I am writing as one who works in terms of radio, and perhaps I am a little prejudiced. But it seems to me that the radio in this country is succeeding precisely where our film industry is failing. As the cinema moves farther away from real life and real values, so the radio is moving closer to them; not merely in such documentary work as the "Meet the People" series, but in its variety entertainment also, where the most popular programme ("Have a Go") is also the nearest to the everyday life of ordinary folk. The finest raw material for both drama and comedy lies in the daily life of the men and women of our own time. It took our film directors many years (and it needed the impact of a total war) to realize this: and they have forgotten it already.

I know that the cinema is a commercial industry, run on a profit-making basis, and that British broadcasting is in the hands of a public corporation. This is true, but the inference which is often drawn from it—that the film industry must follow public opinion whilst the B.B.C. need not—is nonsense. It is particularly nonsensical at the present time because there is precious little evidence for assuming that the public prefers *An Ideal Husband* to, say, *The Best Years of Our Lives*. In terms of radio it is surely significant that Laurence Gilliam's "The Battle for Britain" was so successful that it was repeated immediately, and the B.B.C. willingly reshuffled the existing programme arrangements to allow of its repeat. It is a strange argument indeed which allows the making of melodramatic films about Spivs but prevents the making of a 1948 sequel to *Millions Like Us*. It is more than strange; it is ultimately suicidal. It is, in the short run, artistic suicide, for the new British films are not as technically admirable as those of three or four years ago. In the long run it may well prove suicidal to the industry as a whole. For audiences which enjoyed British films at their best are unlikely to enjoy them now they have returned to the phoney characterization and adolescent psychology of 1938. If British films, on their present form, are saved, they will be saved by two factors which are outside their control: by the restrictions on importing American films, and by the even poorer quality of those American films which are imported. Meanwhile the industry can sit back and wonder why it has lost its supremacy to countries like Italy. The contemporary Italian film has precisely that quality which British films have cast aside—the marriage of the documentary background with the adult fiction-story.

At this time in our history both film and radio should be performing the same sort of national function as they performed during the war. They alone can do it adequately. And the way to do it, I am maintaining, is by the production of a series of sociological dramas rather than by a series of straight, intellectual, documentaries. In the production of such work the film has several obvious advantages over the radio: it can convey a more vivid environment, by moving its cameras over a carefully chosen background: it can take more time in preparing its material, and it isn't confined to a strict transmission-timing. It has a greater range of subject-matter, for there are certain subjects which cannot properly be handled by radio at all. It hasn't the radio producer's permanent headache of what to do with his narrator. And so on.

Radio, on the other hand, has the advantage of the intimate "man to man" approach. The coal miner speaks from the pit to the steel worker as he sits before his kitchen fire. It is also more topical: it should always be up to date. The most topical film item, on the other hand, is often a week or two old before it is seen by the majority of the population. The listener to the radio programme can be hearing men and women who are in reality speaking to him from their lathes or their canteen or their dance-halls. When the radio producer takes his audience to a dance hall it is a real dance hall and, moreover, the scene in the dance hall is taking place *at this very moment*. Even if the cinema audience sees a real dance hall, and not a studio fake, it is usually a dance hall which was photographed several weeks before.

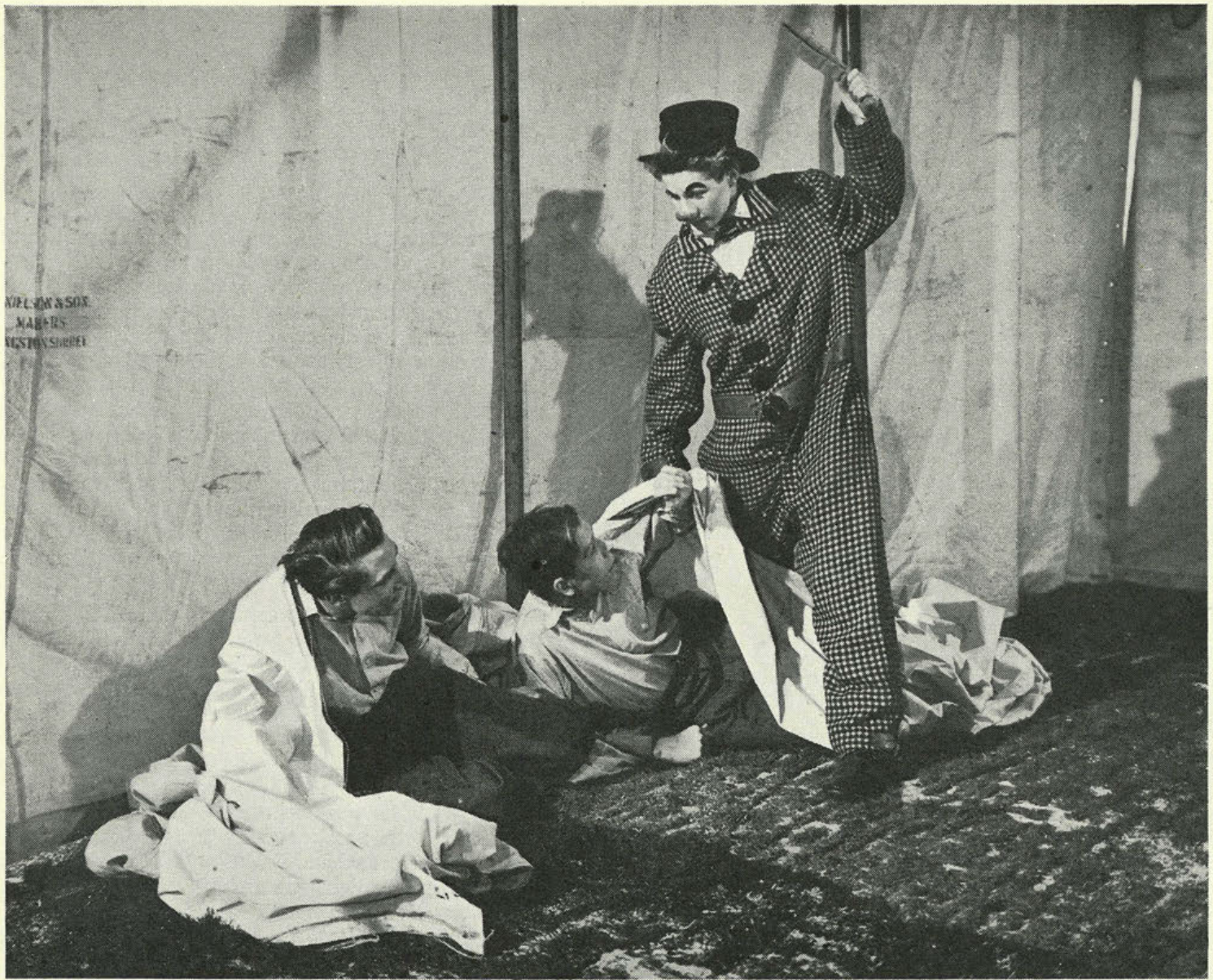
Oh, yes, there are advantages in each case. But the general problem is still the same in each case. Here are two media, each of them highly developed and technically efficient,

which have a limitless power of expressing social reality. From time to time both of them have produced masterpieces in this field: *Kamaradschaft*, *The Informer*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Love on the Dole*, *In Which We Serve*, *The Way Ahead*, *Open City*. Or, in radio, *Mulberry*, *Aaron's Field*, *Junction X* and *The Battle For Britain*. But if the experience of the last two years means anything, future masterpieces are more likely to come from the radio than the cinema.

I am not implying that radio producers have completely mastered the social-documentary form; as a whole, radio documentary is perhaps in danger of making the mistake of the pre-war documentary film-makers—it is a little too intellectual, a little too objective and unhuman, a little too eager to be content merely because real people have actually appeared before a microphone. Miners and cotton operatives and industrial workers generally are not particularly good actors; they are almost always incapable of carrying off an emotional moment. They can tell their own stories and describe their own work; but they can't interpret themselves in their own more emotional moments. The picture they give of themselves is never, therefore, the full picture. They rarely get farther than the characters of the early Grierson films.

The most satisfactory radio solution, I think, is to use actors, and use them in the way in which Gilliat and Launder used them in *Millions Like Us*. And ensure that their accents are correct. This business of accents is vital; and by its system of Regional broadcasting the B.B.C. can ensure that accents always are correct. The film industry is never so certain; films like *Fame is the Spur*, *So Well Remembered* and *Master of Bankdam* employed accents that could never surely have been heard outside a film studio. The radio is unlikely to make such absurd mistakes. A false accent utterly destroys whatever illusion of reality a film or a radio programme might otherwise create. And, more subtly, it is not entirely a matter of accents. A Yorkshire actor said of *Master of Bankdam* that there "wasn't even a Yorkshire face in it". And there's a good deal in what he said. Sometimes a slight lapse can be forgiven; sometimes it entirely ruins the value of the piece as a work of art. Manchester's Civic Film, for instance, was ruined for its own local audience by being narrated in a succession of strange and alien voices. How such a thing can be allowed to happen is one of the minor mysteries of the film business.

If ever a country was in need of intelligent social documentary films, Britain is in need of them now. We know that this country has the directors and the writers, and the actors and the technicians to do the job. Why isn't it being done? If the answer lies in the commercial aspect of the film trade, then we should be ashamed of ourselves that such a situation was ever permitted to arise. If it lies in a mistaken belief about what the public wants, then the mistake can easily be corrected. Meanwhile, must we endure without a protest the long list of adolescent dramas and facile costume pieces that our film-makers eagerly announce? In a long publicity trailer, which presents sequences from films that are better forgotten, Sir Alexander Korda announces that his company is making more films now than it made in 1938. Judging by his publicity, they are the same sort of films as those he gave us in 1938. But then he wasn't here during the war. Other directors were here. Are they going to accept the challenge or not?



Circus Boy

Merton Park for Children's Entertainment Films and G.B. Instructional

CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT FILMS

A British Experiment described by PATRICIA SCHOOLING

IT WAS NOT until Children's Entertainment Films began to produce pictures written and directed exclusively for child audiences, that any serious attempt was made in this country to cater for children at the cinema.

Children's Entertainment Films was formed by Mr. J. Arthur Rank in 1944 to provide children with screen entertainment of good quality. It is an answer to the problem of 400,000 juvenile cinemagoers who regularly attend the Saturday morning clubs associated with the Rank group alone.

The project is not as yet a commercial proposition. Any profits would be used to meet the costs of production, but there are none, and C.E.F. has, in fact, to be subsidised by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. The movement is, however, already recognised as something more than a pro-

gressive step taken within the film industry. There are vast potential markets for children's films at home and abroad. There are the immense possibilities of the 16 mm print. In Britain alone this will mean that children's film shows can be given in the towns and villages all over the country, quite apart from the usual cinema performances. Abroad, as the 16 mm projector becomes more popular, there will be a demand for such prints. A market even further in the future, but a very important commercial avenue, is that of television. C.E.F. hold the television rights of all children's films.

Inevitably there was opposition to Children's Entertainment Films at the outset. Three years ago there were those who, although always ready to deplore the unsuitability of adult films seen by children, were equally quick to criticise

the efforts of C.E.F. which dared to go a step further and provide children with alternative entertainment.

But a more serious obstacle was the scarcity of information. A very few children's films had trickled into this country from Russia, but Great Britain was the first of the great film-producing countries to plan a full production schedule of such films. Of the Russian films, a few have been shown to children in the clubs with a certain degree of success. They are, however, made for an entirely different kind of audience and are distinct in style and technique from those produced here. To all intents and purposes, Children's Entertainment Films began their work in a field entirely unexplored. The likes and dislikes of child cinemagoers, the reactions of children to children's films, could not be assessed beforehand. It was much to the credit of C.E.F. that of the eighteen films produced during the first year none was a failure. Of these five were short stories.

There were casting difficulties. By the Children's and Young Persons' Act of 1933, it is illegal to employ children under fourteen for film making, though it is sometimes possible to obtain a licence for the employment of a child of twelve or over. For this reason an increasing number of children's films are produced abroad, where no such barrier exists.

C.E.F. operates on the advice of an Advisory Council, which watches its production activities and is responsible for all the films made. They are, therefore, closely associated with each picture at every stage of its production. The Council is divided into four reading panels and a suggested script, which has been approved by one of these panels, is circulated to the remaining members and discussed at their monthly meetings. With the Advisory Council rests the final advice as to which scripts should be accepted. The completed film also receives the Council's approval before it is issued to the children's clubs.

The Advisory Council, under the Chairmanship of Lady Allen of Hurtwood, comprises seventeen members representing the most important national organisations concerned with the leisure time activities of children. They include an observer from the Ministry of Education and representatives from the Scottish Office, the Home Office and the British Film Institute.

C.E.F. is not a production unit in itself, but contracts with independent producers to make the selected films.

The last three years have demonstrated clearly that the production of children's films demands a particular ability which many producers and directors, even of the top rank, do not necessarily possess. They need more than a flair for such work. They must have an intangible but unmistakable sympathy with children, an instinctive understanding of their power for enjoyment. The barrier between youth and age is far more than a matter of years, it is the difference between the child whose imagination is real and practical and a vital part of his life, and the man who deliberately tries to escape into his imaginary world.

Psychologists have discovered that until the age of about seven a child lives almost entirely in an imaginary world of his own creating, from the ages of eight to eleven he becomes the perfect extrovert, practical and realist; from the age of twelve onwards as the brain develops and matures, he tries to return to his imaginary world, succeeds

only in using it as an escape. Children's films are made chiefly for the eight to elevens—the realists—and must be correspondingly convincing in plot, character and presentation. It is, therefore, no easy task to make pictures for these children, who are at once appreciative and extremely critical.

But there are a few directors who, possibly by virtue of the childlike nature of their work, are able to bridge this gap. They are the men who make children's films because they believe in them, because the production of children's films, for children, offers them a challenge it needs their utmost skill to answer. From the fifteen independent companies which have so far been contracted to produce for C.E.F. there are perhaps five directors who have the gift of expressing themselves in this new medium with more than technical success. Their discovery is important because the production of children's films is a vital development of the Cinema. An estimated figure of one million children of school age attending cinema clubs weekly may seem little compared to the twenty-five million adults who go to cinemas each week in the British Isles. But that million represents not only the future adult cinemagoers, but the future citizens of Great Britain. They are for this reason alone a public worthy of individual attention. It is, indeed, highly probable that the making of children's films will become one of the most important branches of the film industry.

An experimental approach was the only one possible, and progress is still very much a matter of pursuing new ideas on the results of trial and error. C.E.F. believe that, like a good children's book, a good children's film can do more than entertain. Production policy is influenced by the report of a national enquiry, "Moral Instruction and Training in Schools," edited by Michael Ernest Sadler and published in 1908, one of the most outstanding contributions so far towards a practical appreciation of child reaction. The report reveals the amount to which a young mind is subject to outside influence, and the consequent need for a good example. It is a child's background, the things he sees and hears during his working and his playing hours, that shape his future. And the impressionable, imitative mind of a child cannot fail to be wrongly influenced by films which should be viewed by a grown intellect capable of separating fact from fiction.

Children's films, then, strive to give youngsters this good example. This is not to say that an attempt is made to lecture children through the medium of the Cinema. On the contrary, it is believed that much can be done to give them a positive attitude to life purely by presenting them with invigorating films of high entertainment value.

The schedule of production for C.E.F. ranges from full length story films, serials, nature films, travel films and community singing shorts, to a special film in the form of a club magazine. The intention is to advance concurrently on all sides of the venture, so that in time children's programmes will consist only of films made especially for them. At present it is still necessary in club programmes to include films made originally for adults but passed as suitable for children.

One of the most important aspects of the schedule is the opportunity it gives children to see films made in foreign countries, or with foreign backgrounds. *The Magic Globe*, for example, is a straightforward travel



The Boy who Stopped Niagara

National Film Board of Canada for Children's Entertainment Films
and G.B. Instructional

series, whereby children are introduced to the countries of the world through the eyes of a young English boy and girl. Each issue of the series gives a comprehensive outline of the life of the people in a different country. The value of this series should not be underestimated. True, the children are encouraged to see the films as entertainment, but they will inevitably acquire, to a greater or lesser degree, an understanding of the world in which they live. Children in Great Britain have already been introduced to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lapland and Portugal in this way.

More indirectly, foreign countries form the background of some of the story films. The Blue Mountains of Australia were the background for *Bush Christmas*, the Niagara Falls of Canada is the setting of *The Boy who Stopped Niagara*; *The House Goblin* a Swedish fairy tale, and *Escape from Norway*, have their own pictorial interest. Basutoland, Rhodesia, Western Canada and Russia are also being brought to the screens in children's films.

The story films are given a documentary treatment. Each picture has entertainment value, but they also portray

some trade, or educational subject as an integral part of the plot, so that the film instructs without appearing to do so. The uses of electricity are the central theme of *The Boy who Stopped Niagara*, which, made by the Canadian National Film Board, is now being shown here to children; *Here we come Gathering* takes children fruit picking in Kent, *Fortune Lane* investigates the designing of railway engines, *The Secret Tunnel* deals with the collecting of antiques and study of architecture.

The documentary treatment is not obvious to the young audiences. They see straightforward, dramatic stories, slapstick comedy in the old rip-roaring tradition, pictorially attractive productions. That they are also learning about people and places is something that will only be shown outside the cinema, in their daily lives.

Children are quick to respond to these specialised films, and the older ones among them are developing a critical sense that is one of the most valuable guides to C.E.F. for future planning. The research of the last three years, accumulating week by week as reports come in from cinema

managers, school teachers and psychologists, will influence this and next year's productions.

Arising from the investigation is the discovery that films aimed to please children from the ages of seven to fourteen cover too wide a range of ages. Varying ages have equally varying tastes. There is, too, the inevitable difference of opinion between boys and girls. However, there are one or two general conclusions that can be drawn. It has been found that children, although they are capable of absorbing both the pictorial and dialogue aspects of a film, will deliberately reject dialogue or commentary that is not completely necessary to the plot. There must also be suitable pauses in the dialogue to allow children time to comment upon what they are watching. They like to see life and movement on the screen. Above all they like to see children of their own age on the screen. Children's films which are based on these principles can be truly international, for youngsters all over the world have enjoyed several of the C.E.F. productions without any dubbing being necessary. The humour and the excitement must be visual, and any child can appreciate it.

The popularity of children on the screen reveals that the youngsters of the audiences like to identify themselves with those in the picture. In this, perhaps, lies their ability to obtain the utmost pleasure from a film; in this, perhaps, lies the secret of the Cinema's influence.

The results of this experiment—for Children's Entertainment Films is an experiment—have aroused the active interest of all modern nations. The venture began unheralded, but three years work on a consistently high standard have already begun to bring their reward. America is buying C.E.F. productions, and a number of European countries are arranging special children's shows. The films are shown extensively in the children's club programmes of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The production achievements of the last three years tell their own story. The total of eighteen films in the period of 1944-5 was increased by forty-five in 1946 and last year the number was fifty-four. This year's schedule contains at the present time thirty films. Three will be serials and three will be story films, of which one is to be the first full length fairy story screened for children. Much of the groundwork of this venture has been covered, and C.E.F. feels ready to advance more rapidly in ideas and in production. But the crisis in the film industry has its echo here, and every ingenuity must be summoned to make a decreased budget go twice as far.

But there is no doubt that this branch of the industry, with its vast power for influencing young minds, is extending. The demand is already far exceeding the supply, and Children's Entertainment Films is only at the beginning of the adventure.

The Film in Education

NOTES ON THE USE OF DIAGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL FILMS

By

WINIFRED HOLMES

IN ORDINARY LIFE we think of a diagram as the formal abstraction of a subject. A family tree is just such an abstraction; the photographic images of the people, the shape of their noses, the colour of their hair do not obtrude themselves. We do not need them. All we need is their names; these again are abstractions; symbols like the dates of their birth and death.

A map also is a formal abstraction, the shape of the land masses picked out by a line and the names of the important or relevant towns and countries printed over the right spot. For the purpose of locating these places this abstraction is enough. We do not actually need to see Bombay with its swarming, white-clad people, its mixture of slum houses and pleasant modern ones, its grandiose public buildings, its flowers, its brilliant sunshine, its kites and vultures wheeling in the sky . . . Those features—the physical and material features of the Indian city—are irrelevant to the placing of Bombay in its world setting, with which aspect of it we are concerned at the moment.

These two diagram examples we take for granted when we are grown-up. They tell their story to us and we accept them unthinkingly. But with children this is not so. The idea of making an abstraction, a diagram, is one which must be introduced slowly and carefully and in making

or using educational films, this point must be realised very clearly. The children should have learnt to make diagrams themselves before seeing a film with diagram sequences in it. They could map the school or make some diagrammatic framework on which to score class successes or school goals. Once they understand what a diagram is and its proper relation to reality, they can be shown films which make use of diagram to cover certain aspects of a subject.

In films, diagram is first and foremost an abstraction. It takes the most essential points of the subject or a material object and stresses them, perhaps introduces them one by one, so that the mind does not have to grasp the whole complex of points at once. As well as stressing the most important things, it leaves out what is irrelevant or unimportant to the lesson in question; it is in fact a selection of essentials. The child has to understand that this is so, and has to be led from reality with all its detail into this world of abstraction, while realising that the detail is still there. He must be able to keep the photographic replica of the real thing in his mind—its skin and flesh and blood, so to speak—while he is looking at its skeleton only. The ability to relate reality with the abstraction of reality needs an effort of mind and a grasp of their relationship beyond the powers of very young children. For any children under

seven, diagram sequences should not be introduced into teaching films.

Film producers should take enormous trouble in planning their diagrams from the point of view of their acceptance by the child and their right relation to reality. It is very important, therefore, to slip as unobtrusively as possible from shots of real things to diagrams, so that there is no break in the sequence of impressions the child is getting. The perspective drawing is a useful bridge from reality to flat abstraction; so is the model with diagrams superimposed, the model finally fading out when the child has had time to receive its impression in his mind.

Diagrams essentially lack one dimension. They are flat and thin, not solid or rounded. Some educationists, because of this, believe that models are very much more effective for educational films. There is a great deal to be said for this point of view, but certainly not everything. If the child has accepted the diagram as an abstraction, and if the diagram is introduced skilfully by careful drawing and good direction, it can do various things which models and reality cannot do. Therefore, let us use diagrams, models and reality, wherever each is the most effective.

What are the things diagram can do that models and reality cannot do?

First, it can take you into places where a film camera cannot go—under the covers of the turbine system of a

generator, for instance. It can show the mechanism of the body with the life and movement which would be absent in dissecting a real one.

Second, it can isolate essentials and leave out inessentials.

Third, it can synthesize a process which depends on successive and relative movement.

The right choice of symbols to be used in diagram sequences, especially in physics, is a difficult one and needs tidy thinking to avoid confusion and giving a wrong impression. For instance, arrows should not be used in the same film both as attention pointers and to show direction.

Dots moving along a channel or tube should not represent electric current in one film and water in another. (They should not be used in this way at all for electricity which does not flow from one place to another, like water.) How, too, can air—an unseen element—be represented in visual terms?

There is immediate need for thorough research to be undertaken in this matter of symbols, need for some standards to be set and a rationalisation of what is now left to individual ingenuity. This would help producer and teacher alike. And for the child, who may see three different films on related subjects close together, made by three different film companies, using three different symbols of the same thing—it would be invaluable.

PLANNING AN EDUCATIONAL FILM PROGRAMME

By

A. RUSSELL BORLAND, M.A. *Controller, British Instructional Films Ltd.*

AS ONE OF THE largest producers of educational films we in British Instructional Films have had to face many difficulties in common with other producers. Our task is one which it would be foolish to limit in scope to the production of one type of visual aid, and all the research and experience which went into the production of classroom films before the war has led the wise producer to the conclusion that the classroom film is only one of a number of aids which must be integrated into classroom teaching. This conclusion has been strengthened by our own post-war activity and experience. The planning, therefore, of an educational film programme is not a subject which can be dealt with adequately in a few hundred words and I hope that it might later be dealt with in greater detail when the pooled experiences of other educational film producers can be reviewed for the advantage of all.

When we started our full scale production of films and filmstrips in 1946, we had to get down to serious planning. The question was—who was to plan for us? How were we to determine what films were most required in schools? Since then, of course, the National Committee have formed their own plans for enlisting the co-operation of teacher experts at different levels for the production of educational films, the assumption being that teachers themselves should decide what films were to be made and what should be the content of the films.

This assumption had, as my friend Donald MacKenzie has repeatedly pointed out, always been made by far-seeing

producers of educational films but any plan which envisaged going to a large number of teachers and obtaining information on what was required was generally doomed to be still-born, for the simple reason that few teachers could agree on these matters. Moreover, this at the present stage in the development of educational films seemed to be beginning at the wrong end of the stick. First one had to build from the experience of those teachers who before the war had used educational films extensively. It may seem strange but such teachers are still comparatively few, mainly because of lack of opportunity and the scarcity of projectors.

Within our own organisation we have recruited a number of teacher specialists who understand the requirements of schools from their own experience in the classroom and this nucleus of planners have worked in co-operation with other specialists in the educational field; but we have now for some time felt the need of planning which can be viewed, as I said at the beginning of this article, on a much wider and more comprehensive basis. We have undertaken, therefore, to appoint a well-known educationist who can see the curriculum as a whole, both from the point of view of the more formal type of education and that of the less formal type of education, the threshold of which the new modern secondary schools now seem to be approaching. It will be the problem of the planner to analyse the content of education into the different media of visual aids. He will be concerned not only with the curriculum of to-day but also with that of to-morrow, and with the curriculum not only of the primary but of all types of post-primary schools.

Viewed in this light it is not so much a question of subjects, such as biology, geography and nature study, but what experiences of educational value can be transmitted to the child by means of a film or a filmstrip or a wall chart. We found in compiling our recently published list of educational films that the classification of the films was extraordinarily difficult. A film on *The Modern Bakery* for example, might be classed as a geography film or as a civics film or even as a science film if it is intended for an age range of 9 to 13 and there is no marked degree of specialization which places the film in a certain category. In fact, many films designed for children up to the age of 15 can equally well be used by the teacher of English, the teacher of geography and so on.

Of course, practical considerations at present have determined that in certain fields particular films are more urgently required than other films. I am reasonably convinced that the primary school must be our first target, and that we must build on a foundation of short silent films suitable for an age range of five to nine. This however is a production target rather than a planning target and the rate of production must for a considerable time lag far behind programme planning. Apart from the question of urgency and priority, other practical considerations will determine the final shape of our planned programme, such as questions of cost, the supply of projectors and the relative demand for silent and sound films which will be decided by the teachers themselves. The present high cost of producing films makes the educational film business what might sometimes be described as an extremely hazardous enterprise, and it may be that Henry Ford's dictum "that everything which is useful pays a dividend" is not true of educational films. Nevertheless, this is the situation to-day and costs are high only because the apparatus is not available.

Yet I am not sure that higher production costs at this stage do not in some ways serve a useful purpose since they guide the producer away from long and expensive productions and towards simple short and relatively inexpensive ones. The silent film is less expensive to produce than the sound film. That may be a good financial argument for producing silent films but I believe that silent films are certainly more flexible teaching instruments than sound films.

There is a place for natural sound and certainly there is a place too for sound commentary but I have found in my experience, both as Director of the Scottish Film Council and as Controller of British Instructional Films, that the practising teacher wants to use a film within the framework of a single lesson and to allow the film to play only a small part in a scheme of work which he himself has already prepared without any help from the producer of educational films.

The first important series of films on which we embarked in our production programme included, then, twenty zoo films showing the main bodily characteristics of some of the more familiar zoo animals and birds. This series is intended for the primary school and each film has an average running time of three minutes. Teaching points are limited to three or four and nothing is included in the content of the films which cannot reasonably be assimilated by a child of seven. We do not aim to provide a simple natural history course in visuals but rather to awaken the child's natural curiosity and to lead him to the point where certain generalizations may be drawn from particular observations. Let me illustrate this by referring to the films *Bison*, *Cape Buffaloes* and *Yaks*.

Each of these three films shows the characteristics of a member of the Cow family, and a slightly more advanced film under the title of *The Cow Family* links the first group of films together in such a way that the child can draw his own conclusions. This, then, is a plan within the major plan, to build up on the experience of successive stages in the school curriculum to the work done with the aid of the zoo films. We have planned also a series of recognition wall charts of the various zoo animals listed in the films, in which the teaching points are embodied in a separate panel.

An important outcome of our first year's planning has been a scheme by which the film can be harnessed to the teaching of English, not merely as an occasional relaxation from the study of formal grammar, but as an intensive system of training in the use of words and in the writing of English composition. At the present stage we are unable to say what particular response the presentation of this film material will evoke in schools and whether the response will be different from that obtained from the verbal and blackboard method. Some experiments have already been made at a number of schools with films from our *What Happens Next?* series, which is intended to stimulate written and oral expression by getting the pupil to describe not what he sees but how he thinks the unfinished episode might end. As a tentative conclusion it may be said that this visual approach appears to be a greater stimulus for the imaginative composition than the written approach and among less able pupils there is a definite freeing of language and ideas. The *Find a Word* series, the object of which is to provide the material for vocabulary exercises, is now being developed so that practice in sentence structure and in the observation and report of various related topics may be included. The basis for this scheme receives its support from those teachers who believe that the English lesson means going beyond the boundaries of a self-contained study of written texts. The recently published Interim Report of the Council for Curriculum Reform states in reference to the curriculum framework in English that, "The chief aim of the first year's work is to focus attention on the relation between verbal experience and sense experience generally". Since one of the most cogent sense experiences comes through the moving film, it is clear that the technique of the short film to stimulate verbal expression has a place in the English lesson.

I think I have indicated in these two examples the lines along which we are planning the production of educational films. But there is no hard and fast set of rules providing we know our goal and understand the limitations of our media. The general plan has to be as flexible as possible in order to conform to the varying requirements of teachers.

In these first few years of post-war production, teachers will have to be practical as well as critical, and if one subject has been covered, perhaps not as perfectly as they would wish, but nevertheless fairly adequately by means of a film, it may be that we should delay production of this subject and pass on to those which have never been filmed. At present the resources are too few and too hard pressed to deal with anything but productions of priority urgency, and we are not yet in a position, like the text book publishers, of competing in an absolutely free market with other companies. But with patience and commonsense all round we shall achieve that position some day in the not too distant future.



Sarie Marais

A New South African Film in Afrikaans

Unifilm

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

Sound and the Documentary Film, by Ken Cameron. (Pitman, 1947, 15s.)

When sound was added to the silent film, the aesthetes (as Cavalcanti reminds us in his excellent little introduction to this book) regarded it contemptuously as a retrograde step, and the technicians used it unimaginatively in striving for complete realism. Twenty years have passed, and the persistence of these attitudes, however diminished in vigour, is responsible for the lamentable lack of critical literature on the treatment of sound in the film. Ken Cameron's book is therefore greatly to be welcomed, and all the more so because the documentary film has been the source of some notable experiments in sound, and because he writes, not as an outsider dwelling in the abstract, but as a sound engineer of unrivalled experience dealing with the practical things he knows. He has provided the text-book on sound which every student and future writer on the cinema will find indispensable.

The first and major part of the book is written in terms which every layman will easily comprehend; but in order to cater for the more serious student as well, Mr.

Cameron has added a section of technical abstracts. There is also a glossary of some 400 technical terms.

Two criticisms must be made of an otherwise excellent production, neither of them attributable to the author. The first is that the book is a slim one for its price; the second is that the reproduction of the illustrations is quite deplorable. Rising costs justify the first; but there is no excuse for the second.

ERNEST LINDGREN.

Women Talking. (3s. 3d.) **The Presentation of Films.** (2s. 3d.) **Film Production.** (2s. 3d.) (Royal Photographic Society: Kinematograph Section.)

It may not be generally realised that women can secure some of the more coveted jobs in film making. The work described as "continuity" is always associated with "girl", but women play an important part in other spheres of film production as well. A woman director or art director is, however, something rare, and, therefore, the publication of "Women Talking", which contains an account of the work of six women in different fields

of film production, should provide a stimulus to aspiring feminine film technicians.

The reader of "The Presentation of Films" may possibly gain the impression that the organisation of a public film show is even more complicated than it really is. However, the authors are right to be over cautious, and the enumeration of the many legal and technical matters, which must be attended to before a film show is undertaken, should have a salutary effect on enthusiastic but inexperienced projectionists.

The third booklet, which, like "The Presentation of Films", is intended primarily for Film Societies, gives a concise and explicit account of the steps to be taken in the production of a film.

"Film Production" contains much useful advice, including the inadvisability of societies being too ambitious in their first productions; the necessity for the director and producer (and, we may add, the cameraman) "to familiarise themselves with the subject to be filmed"; and the desirability of not purchasing too much equipment in the early stages.

Further booklets are promised which, if they maintain the standard of the current editions, should provide a valuable introduction to the elements of cinematography.

PETER PLASKITT.

Filmen Vaexer Upp (The Film Grows Up), by Rune Waldekrantz. (Stockholm, Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1941.)

This book contains a short and objective history of the film from its beginnings fifty years ago, with Lumiere and Melies, up to the outbreak of the second world war. Taking the director as the most important participant in the creation of a film, the author gives an analysis of the work of all the great directors from Porter, Griffith, De Mille and Ince, via Lubitsch, v. Stroheim to Capra and, last but not least, Chaplin. He also gives a vivid picture of Hollywood and its background and the origin of star-worship. As regards the American film, his most interesting study is that of Walt Disney, who, he maintains, has the same importance for the cinema as Aesop and Hans Christian Andersen had for literature.

Although he lays stress on the importance of the American film, he points out that it would not have developed as it did had it not been for the European cinema, and he makes a detailed survey of Continental films. He gives an account of the Swedish, Danish, German, Russian and Italian cinema and analyses the work of the French directors. As the book was published in 1941, the British cinema is hardly mentioned, except in connection with the documentary film.

The book is illustrated with stills typical of different periods, countries and styles. It has an excellent biographical index of all important directors and actors and each entry gives the year and title—in the original language and in Swedish—of all the films with which the individual in question has been concerned.

RAGNA JACKSON

Un Nouvel Art: Le Cinema Sonore, by Jean A. Keim. (Paris, Albin Michel, 1947.)

This is an account of the aesthetic evolution of the sound film, which is analysed against historical and technical backgrounds and classified according to both subject matter and national schools. Starting from the belief that the coming of sound so transformed the silent cinema that the sound film is in effect a completely different art, Jean Keim has attacked his subject conscientiously and with an obvious affection for the film. The book, however, is a readable, popular exposition of film appreciation rather than a significant contribution to aesthetic theory, and will probably contain nothing new to serious students of the film. Various inaccuracies are to be excused on the grounds that it was written in a German prison camp.

RACHAEL LOW.

Panorama du Cinema, by Georges Charensol. Enlarged edition illustrated and re-issued by Lo Duca and Maurice Bessy. (Paris, Jacques Melot, 1947.)

It is a pity that so comprehensive a title as "Panorama of the Cinema" should

have been given to a book which deals solely with feature films. This work, originally published in 1929, has now been revised and brought up to date, but the emphasis remains strongly on the early days of the cinema and the development of the silent film. Further, the author, in discussing foreign films, has confined himself to those shown in Paris; a system which, while ensuring first-hand judgments, inevitably produces rather a lopsided view of the output of other countries. The book is divided into geographical sections, that dealing with France being, naturally, by far the most valuable and, at the same time, the most readable. The English cinema is dismissed in little more than a page and English readers may be saddened, though not surprised, to find such actors as Charles Laughton and George Arliss figuring among the American "also rans" without further attribution of nationality. The book concludes with a final chapter on the present state of the cinema which stresses the great gulf widening between American and European films. There is a short bibliography; and the book is profusely illustrated with stills, some of which are from films not even mentioned in the text.

NORAH K. LEWIS.

We Made a Film in Cyprus, by Laurie Lee and Ralph Keene. (Longmans, Green, 1947, 12s. 6d.)

This book contains a vivid and racy account of the making of the beautiful documentary film, "Cyprus is an Island", which was made in Cyprus during the last days of the European War and was first shown in 1946 at the Curzon Cinema and more recently at two International Film Festivals in France and Czechoslovakia. In the first part of the book, Laurie Lee describes how he flew out to Cyprus. He travelled about there to get his impressions of the island life. His tour was full of unusual incident, both romantic and crude, tinged by antiquity and, at times, by unexpected modernity, and full scope seems to have been offered for a poetic conception in that poetic land. Then he wrote the script of the film and chose the actors. Ralph Keene then tells about the shooting of the film, which was completed in seven weeks. He gives an interesting account of some of the practical problems connected with the shooting of the film and how they were negotiated. The finished script is given in an appendix. The book is illustrated by reproductions of photographs of beautiful Cypriot scenes and interesting snapshots of the authors at work. Illustrative maps of the island form the endpapers.

Films Since 1939, by Dilys Powell. The Arts in Britain Series, No. 3. (Longmans, Green, for the British Council, 1947, 2s.)

In this essay, which is one of a series intended primarily for readers of other countries, the author makes a critical survey of British films made during the period of the second world war and immediately after. She describes the evolution of the film in the British idiom: the documentary film, those which record current history and the British way of life and other types of film. Although the facts are probably known to most British readers, it

is a pleasure to find them set down in so clear and concise a form and from the pen and point of view of Dilys Powell. The pamphlet is illustrated by reproductions of stills from several of the most outstanding British films of the period and of photographs of some of the best known British directors.

The Boys' and Girls' Film Book, by Mary Field and Maud M. Miller. (Burke, 1947, 10s. 6d.)

This well produced book, which is written in a straightforward, simple style, should be appreciated by older children who take an interest in films and those nowadays are probably the majority, and also by people of more advanced years, especially perhaps those parts of the book which deal with the more technical side of film making. The book is concerned with all aspects of film production from earliest times and is interspersed with anecdotes which have a bearing on the particular subject in hand. One might possibly say that in some parts of the book there is a definite accent on money, rather surprising in a book intended for children but perhaps only natural when one considers that the cinema is usually held to be primarily an industry. It contains excellent reproductions of photographs and stills, some of them in colour, illustrative of the text. Mary Field, of course, needs no introduction, for she is well known as the producer and director of educational films and now as director of the J. Arthur Rank Children's Film Organisation, and Maud Miller is a studio correspondent and film critic. The book has an introduction by John Mills.

Screen and Audience, edited by John E. Cross and Arnold Rattenbury. (Saturn Press, 1947, 5s.)

This is the first in the new series, entitled "The Film To-day Books", and is described as an occasional miscellany devoted to the contemporary cinema. In an outspoken introduction there is a statement of the policy to be followed with regard to the series and the intention is expressed that the contributors will always "be those people who are passionately interested in the cinema, professionally involved in it or merely won to a belief in its endless possibilities and tortured by their frustration". The present issue contains a large number of articles on a variety of subjects connected with the film and many of them have the ring of authority.

The contributors express themselves frankly, interesting points are raised and many of the opinions presented invite argument. The articles include a symposium on the evolution of a feature film (*Rescue*) on the poster and the public, a subject of some consequence to those who travel daily along roads lined with hoardings, by Ronald Ingles, the Dalton Film Tax by Gerard Fay, on the future of the British Film Institute by Sinclair Road, on Carl Dreyer by Dilys Powell, on Roberto Rossellini by Basil Wright, on the film on paper by John Mortimer, which should be of interest to aspiring script writers, and on first things first at UNESCO by John Grierson. Some of the illustrations are excellent.



His Majesty's Rival

See article on page 133

Svensk Filmindustri

The Cinema and the Public: An Inquiry into Cinema and Expenditure Made in 1946, by Kathleen Box. Social Survey Report, New Series, 106. (Central Office of Information, 1947, 2s. 6d.)

The information given in this report was collected in the course of two inquiries, one in March, the other in October, 1946. It gives statistics on the frequency of cinema going, the cinema audience, cinema going habits and the price paid for seats.

How to Run a Film Library. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 1946, 50c).

This short guide to the effective running of a library of classroom films is set out in the graphic manner in which Americans excel. It advises on record-keeping, storage, maintenance and other matters connected with library routine.

Michael Balcon's 25 Years in Films, edited by M. Danischewsky. (World Film Publications, 1947, 12s. 6d.)

In this book the editor gives an interesting and racy account of the work and career of Michael Balcon. There are also appreciations of the well-known producer by G. Campbell Dixon from the point of view of a critic, by Michael Redgrave and

Francoise Rosay from that of the actor and by Cavalcanti from that of the director. The illustrations, which occupy a large proportion of the book, include a large section devoted to reproductions of unusual stills from the producer's many films.

Building an Audio-Visual Program, by Robert E. Schreiber. (Chicago, Science Research Association, 1946.)

This book is intended, naturally, for use in America, but most of it should have an interest elsewhere for those concerned with audio-visual education.

A Film in the Making, by John W. Collier. (World Film Publications, 1947, 6s.)

The object of this booklet is "to provoke in filmgoers a questioning, critical attitude by showing a film in the making and by indicating some of the technical and artistic considerations that are involved in making all but the worst films". The author takes as an example the film *It Always Rains on Sunday*, and deals with each section of the work separately. There are a large number of illustrations.

The Miracle of the Movies, by Leslie Wood. (Burke, 1947, 15s.)

This book certainly covers a good deal of ground, a large amount of information

is provided and answers are given to questions which must often have puzzled the layman. For example, the author writes, "After a few weeks a film is, as far as the Trade is concerned, so much junk. This astonishes the film societies, who cannot understand why masterpieces are not carefully stored. The film trade's explanation is that it has no room to store past successes, which it may never re-issue and that, because of the fire regulations, it has storage vaults only sufficient to keep on hand a supply of current attractions". The book gives an account of the film from earliest times and from most aspects, which is interspersed throughout with anecdotes. It is fully illustrated.

Theatre, Winter, 1947. (Bradford Civic Playhouse, 2s. 9d., post free.)

The film section of this interesting periodical contains articles by Peter Noble on von Stroheim, R. E. Whitehall on "Shakespeare on the Screen" and Ruth Partington, who analyses recent French films.

Working for the Films, edited by Oswald Blakeston. (Focal Press, 1947, 10s. 6d.)

This book contains articles by nineteen authorities on each of the following careers: script writer, director, documentary director, film actor, agent, producer, production

manager, assistant director, art director, cameraman, documentary cameraman, newsreel cameraman, still cameraman, sound man, continuity girl, film editor, film cartoonist, composer, film publicist. There is also a chapter on working conditions and salaries and a glossary of terms. The book is intended to help the reader to discover whether he has the qualifications for the career which he is seeking. The nineteen articles are complete in themselves but, as the editor says in his introduction, the whole book must be read, for the whole film world has a structure. There are four useful diagrams, showing the number of British and American films shown in Great Britain during the last ten years, the number and floor space of British studios before, during and shortly after the war, the comparative numbers of people working for the films before the war and towards its end, and the four main production areas of film work and their personnel. The publishers wish us to state that they will send review copies to Film Society Journals on application.

Sequence Two, Winter, 1947. (Oxford University Film Society, 2s.)

A notice of "Sequence One" appeared in the Spring Number of SIGHT AND SOUND and we are glad to see that from January, 1948, this interesting and enterprising periodical, which is edited by Lindsay Anderson, Penelope Houston and Peter Ericsson, is to appear quarterly. Contributors, subscribers and enquirers should write to Penelope Houston at Somerville College, Oxford. The current number contains several articles on the film and also reviews of films and books on the film.

The American Way of Life, as portrayed in film strips: an experiment in visual education, by David Carson. (Scottish Educational Film Association, 1947, 2s.)

This report, in pamphlet form, describes an experiment with the use of projectors and film strips, generously provided by the United States Information Service. The strips deal with the geography and the social and economic life of the United States, and the purpose of the experiment was to see how far they succeeded in portraying a national way of life. The results are given in the report and do indicate that the pictures "did bring to the Scottish classrooms something of the colourful history of the States" and the Scottish children did manifest an eager curiosity over the domestic customs and daily behaviour of the typical American citizen, which are "all parts of the jigsaw of mutual understanding".

Penguin Film Review, 4. (Penguin Books, 1947, 1s.)

This number includes articles on film music by Muir Matheson and John Huntley, on acting for stage and screen by Googie Withers, on *Brief Encounter* by David Lean, and many others. It is illustrated by stills.

Talking of Films, by R. J. Minney. (Home and Van Thal, 1947, 6s.)

In this book the author gives a succinct account of what, in his opinion, is the position of the British film industry to-day. He discusses the cinema as an industry, the reasons for high production costs, the British and American film markets, the question as to whether the cinema is an art or an industry and the problem to be

faced in the selection of talent for the screen. He has a chapter on script writers, film producers and directors. He ends by drawing attention to what he considers should be an opportunity for the British film industry. In a useful appendix he tabulates the amount of studio space in Great Britain, its production and ownership.

Aus der Rumpelkammer des Films: Respektlosigkeiten, Anekdoten, Kuriosa, by Rudolf Leutner. (Vienna, Erwin Cudek, 1947.)

This book contains a farrago of anecdotes and more or less *bons mots*, taken chiefly from German and Austrian periodicals. It is illustrated by comic black and white drawings.

Points of Contact: World Off Duty. (Contact Publications, 1947, 5s.)

The first of these two Contact Books contains an illustrated article on Prague and the Barrandov studios as an international film centre; the second an article in which Connery Chappell and various members of the film industry discuss the Battle of the Quota: the future of British films.

Art in Cinema: A Symposium on the Avantgarde Film, edited by Frank Stauffacher. (San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Art: Art in Cinema Society, 1947.)

This publication is primarily a catalogue of ten programmes with notes of experimental films, presented at the San Francisco Museum of Art, entitled "Some Precursors". The catalogue is preceded by interesting articles by various authorities on the experimental cinema, including a history of the avantgarde by Hans Richter, Audio-visual Music, by John and James Whitney, and The Origin of Dr. Caligari, by Erich Pommer. The book is well produced and chiefly illustrated by excellent stills from the films included in the programmes. There is an index.

Le Cinema et ses Hommes, by Henri Colpi. (Montpellier, Causse, Graille et Castelnau, 1947.)

This should be an extraordinarily useful book to those who are working for the films, both in a professional and amateur capacity and for anyone who is not merely a passive spectator. The book contains first a concise history of the art of cinema, together with a list of important dates. This is followed by sections on scenario and dialogue, decor, acting, photography and music. Last but most important comes the list of directors, grouped under countries (France, America, Germany and Austria, Russia, Great Britain, Italy, Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Switzerland), and arranged alphabetically. There is a brief analysis of the work of each director and his outstanding films, and under each country there is a short survey of the films of that country. There are two excellent indices, one of films, the other of film personalities, classified as scenarists, art directors, cameramen, musicians and directors. The work does not pretend to be exhaustive but it fills, nevertheless, a long felt want.

Films in Instruction. Part I. Films—Their Use and Misuse. (1945, 3s. 6d.)
Part II. The Teacher's Manual.

(1947, 6s.) Both by N. H. Rosenthal. (Melbourne, Robertson and Mullens.)

The author of these little books is Officer-in-Charge of Visual Education, R.A.A.F., and he puts the case for the film in the educational sphere. The exploitation of the film as a method of instruction was developed more fully during the war years, when the time factor was important and the film was recognized as a swift method of inculcating knowledge. Mr. Rosenthal, in his first book, discusses what qualities should be looked for in a training film, how it can be used to best advantage, and also the various types of equipment and their use. There is a bibliography and a suggested list of films for an intermediate general science course. The second book has chapters on making visual aids, care of 16 mm. film, and the availability of equipment. The appendix has a list of sources of information and equipment and a teacher's commentary to accompany a film strip. Both books are illustrated.

Register of Feature-Film Credits, 1944-1946. (Association of Cine-Technicians, 1947, 2s. 6d.)

This booklet, which has a foreword by Anthony Asquith, should be invaluable to anyone who takes a professional interest in films. It contains the most detailed credits of British feature films and, a rarity nowadays, an index at the end. Its publication has been delayed, but three years are now published together and it is the publishers' intention henceforward to issue it annually. It should, therefore, become a standard source of reference and "a major contribution to the documentation of British films".

Entree des Artistes, by Henri Jeanson. (Paris, La Nouvelle Edition, 1946.)

This is one of a series of scripts of French film classics, which are being published in a uniform edition. There is a preface by Louis Jouvet, who describes how the film came to be made, and the script is followed by a number of extracts from the Press, published in 1938, when the film was first released. The book is illustrated by a portrait of Jouvet and by stills from the film.

Report of the Commission on Technical Needs in Press, Radio, Film, following the Survey in Twelve War-Devastated Countries. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (Paris, UNESCO, 1947, 6s.)

The twelve countries where field enquiries were made were Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia, China and the Philippines, and the questionnaire on films dealt with the following: production facilities, production companies and agencies, technicians, distribution companies and agencies, exhibition commercial, educational cinema and other visual aids, organisations and publications and legislation. The volume includes the recommendations of the Film Sub-Commission, made after it had examined the survey of the needs of the twelve countries as a whole and those detailed in the reports on each country, prepared by the Secretariat and given as appendices.

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